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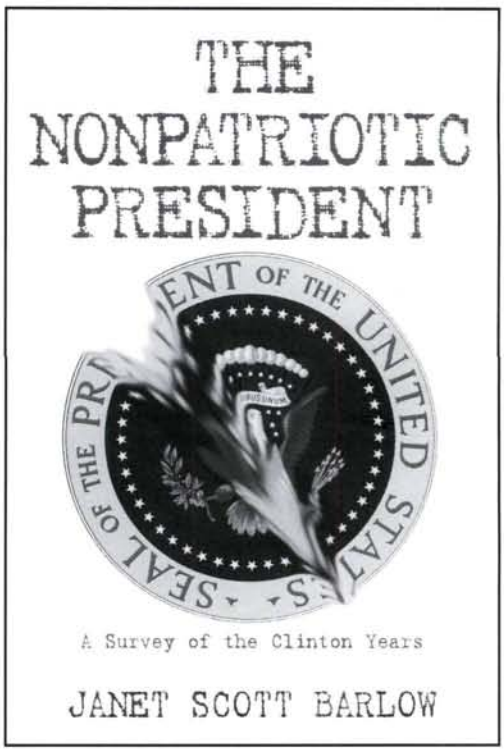

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Chronicles

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POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Capitalism and Culture

As both a capitalist and an Old Rightist, I was ambivalent about Sam Francis's article declaring capitalism the enemy (*Principalities & Powers*, August). There is much truth to his analysis, but his blanket condemnation goes too far.

Small-scale capitalism provides much of the freedom that remains in this country. The entrepreneurial boom of the last decade, and the wealth that has been created, are marvels to behold. What does Dr. Francis propose as an alternative to capitalism?

These caveats aside, Dr. Francis is right about the corruption of contemporary American capitalism. This is not necessarily endemic to capitalism itself, but rather to the mutant, manic "bubble" capitalism of the last five years. The stock-market boom has created much wealth but it has also done much evil.

Without the boom, illegal immigration would be much lower. The rising stock market has financed the growing power of the politically correct element in the country. Without the boom, there would have been no bombers over Serbia: The rising stock market has financed the global world hegemony long sought by the lovers of empire.

American capitalism is going through a stage comparable to that of the 1920's and 60's: Enormous gains in wealth accompanied by a sharp decline in the culture. This decline will be arrested the same way it was in the previous two eras—by a stock-market crash. When the bubble bursts, Americans will wake up to the decay that they have tolerated in their Faustian trade for money.

Capitalism is not the problem; it is the financial bubbles that seem to occur two or three times every century. Once the current mania ends, rightists will leave Ayn Rand for Edmund Burke. Making money through capitalism is not evil; making the pursuit of money one's God is. American culture needs a stock-market crash.

—Blake Joyner
Chicago, IL

Dr. Francis Replies:

I have no disagreement with the late Blake Joyner about the value of "small-scale capitalism" in sustaining freedom (although I would prefer the term "business" or "enterprise" to "capitalism" in this context). I do disagree that "American culture needs a stock-market crash."

What American culture needs is an economic system and an economic elite that can consistently work together with the culture, the nation, and the people that make private enterprise possible rather than working to destroy them as contemporary managerial capitalism does.

Mr. Joyner was one whose life exemplified how American business and businessmen should work to protect and preserve both cultural tradition and personal liberty, but I cannot say he was representative of most American business leaders today.

Blake Joyner was one of the best friends *Chronicles* has ever had. A perennial optimist, he "converted" to our side after going to the beach and reading a year's worth of the magazine. Blake made his living in gold-mining stocks, and he used to say "*Chronicles* is like gold. Its real value is unappreciated in boom times and a bubble economy." He thought people would only come to their senses if the market crashed. Blake thought nothing of driving from Chicago up to Rockford to hear a speaker, and he followed us to Northern Italy for the entire conference and tour, where he played boon companion and baggage-lifter for the entire party. He charmed everyone he met. The last time I talked to him was in connection with this letter to the editor. He did not want to give the wrong impression, he said, because he admired Sam Francis. Only a day or two later, he died of a heart attack at the age of 45.

—Thomas Fleming

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OUR FREE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, once the envy of the world, is sinking ever further into the decadence of empire. We can scarcely call "republican" a regime in which oligarchical judges contravene law, common sense, and majority will, and yet are obeyed by 270 million "citizens" with barely a murmur; in which the media of education and information contract steadily into a uniform unthinking orthodoxy of ruler worship; in which artificial aristocracies of special privilege have become steadily more entrenched.

The best evidence of the decay of the Founding Fathers' republican virtues and principles is found in our two major presidential candidates. For the first time, the American people are presented with a choice between two princes of the imperial blood.

From the disappearance of the genuine aristocracy of the founding generation until today, at least one presidential candidate (and usually both) has been a self-made man—that is, someone born of humble origins who has risen to high public office by achievement or, at least, by long and prominent service to the commonwealth. Think of the origins of Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon, Johnson, Ford, Reagan, Dole, Clinton. In fact, that one could be born in a log cabin and aspire to the White House was long regarded as the benchmark of American democracy.

But look at the contenders today: two preppie Ivy Leaguers born into powerful political families. Bush is the son of a president, and Gore, the son of a longtime powerful senator with insider connections to international capital.

There is little difference between them except, perhaps, that one appeals to jocks and the other to nerds. One is a presidential candidate from Connecticut with a running mate from the District of Columbia, while the other is from the District of Columbia with a running mate from Connecticut.

It seems that someone can now become president solely by virtue of being the son of a president—even a president who was rejected by the electorate. Indeed, the president voted out by the people is, along with his lackeys, set to return to power in his son's entourage.

The two pretenders, it is true, have been elected to public offices; they would not be a step from the White House if they had not been. But neither would have held any public office if he hadn't inherited his position. Both are of mediocre talent. Neither has any substantial accomplishment to his credit or any vision that could be called statesmanlike. They are celebrities, which someone once defined as people who are famous for being famous.

They do not disagree more than marginally on anything that really counts: Both are dedicated to cultivating the metastasizing empire at home and abroad. We are left with the right to cheer for the prince of our choice and to acclaim one (and his entourage) into power.

—*Clyde Wilson*

GEORGE W. BUSH's bid for the presidency signals the death knell of the modern conservative movement. The GOP faithful are embracing the Texas governor as the true heir to the mantle of Ronald Reagan, believing that Bush will lead the Republicans out of the political wilderness and back into power. They maintain that Bush's "compassionate conservatism" is the price the right must pay for a Republican administration that will sweep away the moral degeneracy of the Clinton years and implement tax cuts, Social Security reform, and a national missile defense. Rather than signifying an affirmation of Reaganism, however, Bush's campaign is a repudiation of the core principles conservatives have championed for the past 50 years.

On the most important issue for those on the right—repealing the Leviathan state and scaling back government spending—Bush is a typical GOP pragmatist. During his tenure as governor of Texas, the public sector expanded relentlessly; since 1995, the budget ballooned by nearly 40 percent to $100 billion. Last year alone, Bush endorsed $2.1 billion in new spending on education—a record in the state of Texas. During his presidential campaign, he has abandoned the longstanding demand of conservatives to abolish the federal Department of Education. He is calling for national testing, a strong federal role in education policy, and massive increases in government expenditures to reinvigorate "local, community-based" schools.

Bush is a big-government Republican on other issues as well. He has not singled out one government program in the bloated $1.8 trillion federal budget that he would eliminate. On defense spending, he promises more public money to restore the "morale and readiness" of our Armed Forces. Even Bush's much-vaunted plan to begin privatizing Social Security is nothing more than a timid attempt to nibble around the edges of an entitlement program that, as Robert Taft predicted 60 years ago, is destined to be financially bankrupt unless genuine and sweeping reform is enacted. The Texas governor is attempting to transform the GOP into an "inclusionary" party that caters to Hispanics, blacks, women, and homosexuals. His campaign rhetoric is full of meaningless platitudes about celebrating the country's "diversity" and leaving "no child behind." During the Republican Convention, Colin Powell—slated for a position on the Bush defense team—even delivered a speech blasting the GOP for its failure to support affirmative action and to confront "racism."

Bush is not a grand political visionary but an establishment Republican whose concept of governing in the national interest extends only to supporting the multinational business class he represents. He is a staunch supporter of global free trade and unlimited immigration, showing no concern for the plight of displaced blue-collar workers. More importantly, his "compassionate conservatism" neglects to address the cultural issues—such as family breakdown, crime, racial quotas, and the erosion of national identity—that attracted the Reagan Democrats to the GOP and which are essential to forging a Republican majority coalition.

Yet the Bushies believe they are taking a page out of Clinton's playbook by stealing key issues such as education and Social Security. They hope that this will resonate with the electorate, especially with key voting blocks such as suburban soccer moms and senior citizens. The Republicans' strategy is to capture the political center and blur the policy differences between their candidate and Al Gore, hoping that Bush's charisma and folksy campaign style will be enough to lead them to victory. In short, principles are being abandoned in favor of expediency.

The fundamental problem Bush faces is that opinion polls consistently show

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that over 70 percent of American voters believe that the "economy is in good shape" and the "country is on the right track." More importantly, the public credits the Clinton-Gore administration for the "booming economy." Bush's advisors mistakenly assume that the nation's disgust with Clinton's sordid sexual behavior and the need to "restore moral integrity" to the White House is enough to convince voters to opt for change. Yet everyone knows that, for all of his flaws, Gore will not be having sex in the Oval Office: Tipper would not stand for it. Hence, Gore offers the electorate the formula it craves: the continuation of Clinton's policies minus the "bimbo eruptions." No wonder the Bush campaign is floundering.

Which makes the decision by conservatives to support Bush particularly perverse. They are deliberately ignoring his red toryism, his lack of intellectual substance, and his cocaine-snorting and womanizing past. By jumping on Bush's bandwagon with both feet, Beltway conservatives have revealed their real commitments—careerism and opportunism. Is this all that is left of the party of Taft, Goldwater, and Reagan?

—Jeffrey Thomas Kuhner

AL GORE, should he win the Oval Office in November, will owe his victory to the triumph of what G.K. Chesterton called "masculinism"—actually the pseudo-masculinism of the "suffragettes" who have transformed elections into popularity contests. Without the use of polls and across the ocean, Chesterton foresaw this phenomenon 91 years ago in his essay "The Modern Surrender of Women."

His prediction was simple and (even then) controversial: If women were given the vote, democratic politics would degenerate, producing a media-manipulated tyranny, as women became the victims of "male exaggeration." By voting, women would gradually be stripped of their femininity, while men, by shilling for their votes, would cease to be men.

By "masculinism," Chesterton meant two things: man's desire to coerce others and his need to fraternize with other men and argue. These actions are the fundamental components of democracy. Voting "is only the shadow" of "the men of the village shouting at each other at The Blue Pig."

Inevitably, The Blue Pig is full of hot air—"outrageous pomposities of speech." But real men understood that this barroom ritual—call it "politics"—is a hyperbolic "art, which we knew was not the whole of life." Only a naive buffoon would take politics too seriously. We can still see this in Britain's House of Commons. Imagine the "right honorable gentleman" Bill Clinton on *Questions for the Prime Minister*, trying to sell his "Bridge to the 21st Century." The guffaws would be heard from the Thames all the way to Lands End.

Chesterton's piercing eye could see the new Blue Pig of the 21st century, although he did not know its name: the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. There was Al Gore on the ottoman opposite Oprah, musing about his favorite book, his love for Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and Tipper—which inevitably led to talk of "The Kiss." Oprah lobbed him an easy one: "Were you trying to send a message by passionately kissing your wife on national television?" Gore responded, "I was trying to send Tipper a message." The crowd swooned.

"The immediate effect of the female suffrage movement," said Chesterton, "will be to make politics much too important; to exaggerate them all out of proportion to the rest of life." Our masculinized women and feminized men risk more emotional capital on the national election than they do in the areas of life that really matter: home, church, school. The soccer moms who watch Oprah's show are the demographic that will likely decide who becomes president because, as Chesterton predicted, they have surrendered "that throne of satire, realism and detachment from which [they] so long laughed at the solemnities and moderated the manias of the mere politician." The majority of women who were "strong and scornful" has been replaced by a majority that is excessively "submissive, prostrate, and penitent" in the face of a politician.

The kind of men who used to frequent The Blue Pig—and the (real) women who refused to—understood that politics was mostly bunk. "We knew that the country would not be ruined by politicians half so utterly and sweepingly as it could be ruined by nurse maids."

Today's nursemaids are too busy watching *Crossfire* (or one of the other ubiquitous political talk shows) to exercise the exquisite and beautiful tyranny that once was theirs by tradition, culture, and nature. Rather than retain creative control over the real stuff of life—hearth and home—the suffragettes pined for a milk-toast version of The Blue Pig—a world in which modern she-men are content to share the bar with Cokie Roberts, Mary Matalin, and Oprah Winfrey. The brave new world won by the suffragettes and maintained by the establishment is full of insipid homes and Blue Pigs, in which no one is content.

Rush Limbaugh keeps telling the GOP troops not to worry; the polls don't mean anything. Bush will win on character. But what the Limbaughs do not realize is that the Bushes (and the Bob Doles) of this world are not welcomed at the new Blue Pig—unless they become more like Al Gore and Bill Clinton. Perhaps that is why Bush went on Oprah and said that, as president, he would "usher in a new era of tough love"; or why Pat Buchanan picked Ezola Foster to be his running mate. Still, both Bush and Buchanan look and sound too much like relics from The Blue Pig: They will never be comfortable on Oprah's stage. And that is why they cannot win.

—Aaron D. Wolf

EDUCATION is a hot topic this election year, and both Al Gore and George W. Bush are trying to claim the mantle of the "Education President." To listen to the two campaigns, Texas either has the worst public schools in the nation, or the best; the media should be able to determine which campaign's claims are closer to the truth, but they're more interested in reporting the debate than in providing voters with the facts. One point on which both Gore and Bush seem to agree, however, is that public education is woefully underfunded: Bush has proposed sinking millions of new dollars into Head Start (among other failed programs), while Gore has promised to continue the Clinton administration's plan to get every child in America hooked up to the Internet. No matter which one wins, the Department of Education is here to stay, and the federal role in education is certain to increase.

With federal intervention, of course, comes greater regulation of education and more federal spending. Although many conservatives have argued that there is some sort of metaphysical difference between spending tax dollars on education and using private money—government spending inevitably corrupts, while private funds lead to nothing but goodness and light—there is a growing body of evidence that suggests that in-

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creased spending (both public and private) is part of the problem of American education, not its solution.

The September 2000 issue of *Foundation Watch*, a publication of the Capital Research Center in Washington, D.C., reveals that private companies and foundations—including the Walter F. Annenberg Foundation, the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, the Soros Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation—have enriched the coffers of public schools with millions of dollars in recent years. At best, the money—when used for such things as programs to increase reading scores—has had little or no effect; in many cases, particularly when it is spent on technology, the money has actually harmed public education. "Progressive" conservatives who believe that computers will radically improve public education should pay close attention to a 1998 study by Harold Wenglinsky of the Educational Testing Service. *Foundation Watch* reports that Wenglinsky found that "computer drills had no effect on fourth graders and a large *negative* impact . . . on eighth graders," while frequent computer use at school "had a negative impact on scores of students in both grades . . . "

Foundation Watch attributes the failure of private philanthropists to improve public schools to the nature of public education itself, suggesting that "the private sector [is] simply buttressing a failed government system that is resistant to change." While there is something to that analysis, it's also true that most private schools are just as enamored of technology and the latest (and most expensive and untried) curricula as are public schools. The systemic problems of American public education have infected private education as well.

The public schools in my hometown in Michigan spend considerably more per student today than they did when I was growing up, but so does the Catholic school—and the quality of education has declined at both. Those who are concerned about American education should consider the possibility that, above a certain basic level, any money—public or private—that is spent on education may have a detrimental effect, because it allows schools to set up programs that distract them from their central mission. For my part, I'll vote for the presidential candidate who vows to eliminate the Department of Education while urging schools—both public and private—to fire their grant writers and to refocus their efforts on teaching the three R's.

—*Scott P. Richert*

Hillary Rodham Clinton wasn't the only politician at the annual Gay and Lesbian Pride March in Manhattan last June, but she got the most notice. The police had trouble controlling the crowd as she walked behind the Radical Faeries, which featured a man on roller skates who was wearing a silver cape, a tiara, a jockstrap, and nothing else. Mrs. Clinton thought that the absence of Rick Lazio, her Republican rival for the New York Senate seat that's up for grabs, was just a shame. How could he claim to represent all New Yorkers if he failed to show up for the Gay and Lesbian Pride March?

Well, exactly. Now that Vermont has legalized "gay marriage" and New York has strengthened its "hate crime" laws, the homosexual movement seems to be on a roll, gathering support from just about every direction. But neither Hillary Rodham Clinton nor her live-away husband down in Washington would allow their place at the leadership of that movement to be questioned. "Bill," as he is called, tried to create a homosexual fief in the U.S. military in 1993 and got his fingers burned. His compromise "don't ask, don't tell" position was a disappointment to the movement, but not his appointment of hundreds of homosexuals to federal positions.

But more recently, not to be outdone by his wife or her like-minded friends in his Cabinet, Bill showed how far he was willing to go in a moment of highly revealing passion. His mistake was spectacular, considering how much is at stake both in the presidential contest and his spouse's Senate race. But even more peculiar was the reaction: There wasn't one. It was a case of Sherlock Holmes's dog that didn't bark.

First, last June 23, the President of the United States—the honorary chairman of the Boy Scouts—actually issued executive order No. 13160 to forbid discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in federal education and training programs. Five days later, the Supreme Court ruled by a margin of one vote that the Boy Scouts could indeed exclude homosexuals as members or leaders. Then the pressure groups got busy. Chicago and San Francisco and other cities revoked the Boy Scouts' access to public facilities. Corporations (Chase Manhattan Bank, some United Way chapters) withdrew sponsorship, and the White House staff was on the phone to other government agencies, putting in place the edict that would bar the annual Boy Scout Jamboree from being held on federal land (Fort A.P. Hill). As things began to spiral out of control, Attorney General Janet Reno was once again called to put out the fire and cover for Bill. She ruled on September 1 (a Friday night, which is when you do things if you want them played down in the national news) that Bill's edict did not mean that the Boy Scouts couldn't camp on federal land, even though the Interior Department and the Justice Department, prodded by the White House, had quietly let it be known that Bill's temper tantrum meant what it said. So cooler heads (a call from the Gore campaign?) prevailed after a bit of heat, and the honorary chairman of the Scouts was caught trying to punish them after he sniffed the wind about the Supreme Court decision. Somebody figured, "Take it easy, Bill. After Al gets in, we'll take care of the one vote margin. And who knows—maybe the nominee will be Hillary!"

But what was the response to one of the most absurd episodes in American history? Gore and Lieberman were quiet as mice. George W. Bush let on that he was "troubled." And the House voted against a bill to revoke the charter of the Boy Scouts of America, 362 to 12. Democrats actually called that bill, sponsored by Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), an attempt to embarrass them. And that was the end—there was no reaction worth mentioning. The conspiracy of homosexuals—no, make that "governing liberals"—to undermine American values in the form of a long-established boys' association made zero impact on the public, nor was it seized as an issue by the Republicans during an election year. The result looks like another conspiracy—a conspiracy, by those who have something to lose, to lose.

And that is as it should be. Any creature or polity that does not respond to aggression is doomed. The "happiness" or complacency of the American people will not be disturbed by truth, nor can it be. Revolutionary reconstruction of the culture can proceed without protest, signified by the smiley-face of Hillary Rodham Clinton, who has "always fought for children" in an abstract and governmental way. And the satanic dialectic which

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we have willfully accepted grinds on inexorably. The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts will, of course, defend the North American Man/Boy Love Association against a federal lawsuit that claims that the NAMBLA website and literature incited the murder of a ten-year-old boy. Two men are serving life sentences for that murder, but the ACLU believes that advocacy of pedophilia is a First Amendment issue. Lawrence Frisoli, the lawyer who brought the suit, has declared, "We allege an ongoing criminal conspiracy for the rape of children in America" (*New York Times*, September 1). I think of it more as a Second Amendment issue, myself.

As our country drifts closer to institutionalized instruction in sodomy as a rite of passage for young men, because that will make it easier for them to adjust to the "new" Army (and by the way, the Girl Scouts have had no trouble because they don't "discriminate"), I was rather shocked that Kweisi Mfume and the NAACP also booted an opportunity. In our land of government-supervised equality and diversity, should an American fort or any installation be named after a lieutenant general in the Confederate Army, a slaveholder and defender of slavery, whose statue, erected by racists, stands in Richmond, Virginia, because he died defending that city in 1865? Yes, I am referring to Ambrose Powell Hill, whose name was on the lips of both Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson as they died—and I am calling for a boycott of the national economy until Fort A.P. Hill is renamed "Fort Liberace." That could be the site of a real jamboree, if you know what I mean.

—J.O. Tate

JOSEPH LIEBERMAN's selection as the first Orthodox Jew to run for vice president may have the unexpected effect of making it respectable again to maintain that the United States is a Christian country. Picking Lieberman as his running mate was the single most interesting thing Al Gore has done in his campaign for the White House. Pundits assumed that Gore was trying to repudiate the sordid behavior of President Clinton which had led to his impeachment: Lieberman, as the first Democratic senator to criticize the President for his immorality, could inoculate the ticket against the charge that Clinton's indecency has damaged the country.

The claim that Lieberman is a person of principle is questionable; immediately after declaring on the Senate floor that the President's conduct was "intolerable" and "inexcusable," Lieberman failed to demand Clinton's resignation, and he ultimately did not vote to remove him from office. Worse, within days of becoming the vice presidential nominee, Lieberman reversed himself on the privatization of Social Security, school vouchers, and his opposition to affirmative action. Those positions initially made Lieberman appealing to conservatives and moderates, but since they were anathema to the Democratic Party's core constituency of bureaucrats, public-school teachers, and minorities, he abandoned them in the most public and unseemly way.

Even so, there is one principle that Lieberman continues to proclaim: his belief that his political success and, indeed, his entire career has been the result of divine intervention. As he remarked on the day he was selected, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

Lieberman has emphasized the American tradition of celebrating religion's contribution to politics. Before a largely black audience at the Detroit Fellowship Chapel, he declared that "The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, not freedom from religion" and that "As a people, we need to reaffirm our faith and renew the dedication of our nation and ourselves to God and God's purpose."

But something strange happened. Howard Berkowitz and Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) lashed out at Lieberman for his remarks at the Detroit Fellowship Chapel. "We feel very strongly," the two wrote to the senator, "and we hope you would agree, that appealing along religious lines, or belief in God, is contrary to the American ideal." They went on to argue that the "First Amendment requires that government neither support one religion over another nor the religious over the non-religious." Berkowitz's and Foxman's sentiments reflect dominant Supreme Court jurisprudence since the mid-1960's, but they are completely wrong in their interpretation of constitutional history. There is no doubt that the Framers believed (as George Washington, John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay made quite clear) that there could be no social order without law, no law without morality, and no morality without religion; even under the First Amendment, governments are well within their rights when they promote religion. Lieberman, to his credit, has been quoting Washington to that effect, but Berkowitz and Foxman understand the implications of the senator's statements, and they are horrified.

So are many of the nation's editorialists, who are also alarmed by groups seeking to organize "spontaneous" prayer at high-school football games, despite the Supreme Court's recent banning of the practice when sponsored by school authorities. The *New York Times* argues that spontaneous prayer might make some feel "excluded"; therefore, it ought to be discouraged. But Lieberman's celebration of religion has legitimated spontaneous religious expression, and, like prayers at football games, it may be regarded as speech protected under the First Amendment's "free exercise" clause. If Lieberman's views about dedicating ourselves to God's purpose resonate with voters, it will be difficult for Democrats to criticize George W. Bush for declaring Jesus Christ to be the philosopher who had the most influence on him or to attack the governor for proclaiming a "Jesus Day" in Texas. (Bush earlier signed proclamations declaring "Honor Israel Day," a holocaust remembrance week, and a day to honor the Austin Chabad House.)

Lieberman has reopened a national debate on the role of religion in public life. While no single religion has a monopoly on the public square, the Framers believed that Christianity (though no particular sect) unified our nation under God. As recently as a few decades ago, justices of the U.S. Supreme Court could declare America a "Christian nation." But in 1993, when Kirk Fordice, then governor of Mississippi, characterized the United States as a Christian country, he was condemned by the media and such groups as the ADL. The reaction to Lieberman's remarks, however, has been largely positive; even the ADL cannot attack him too severely, lest his value to the Democratic ticket disappear. Lieberman's views may once again become political orthodoxy, and religion may regain a new legitimacy in the public square. If that happens, even advocates of America as a "Christian nation" would have a legitimate claim to be heard. Since 90 percent of Americans still profess Christian creeds, the outcome may not displease Kirk Fordice.

—Stephen B. Presser

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PRESIDENT CLINTON failed to restart the Middle East peace process at the United Nations' "millennial" summit in New York in September. In meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Clinton made one final attempt to provide his presidency with a badly needed foreign policy success by brokering a deal.

His failure is not surprising, and it may have a silver lining: It is better not to sign an agreement than to rush negotiations because of an arbitrary deadline. There is little room for compromise, either on the status of Jerusalem or on the return of Palestinian refugees to their pre-1948 homes. Following Clinton's meeting in Cairo last August with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, it became clear that there is no political will, even among America's Arab allies, to end the current Middle East standstill by pressing Mr. Arafat for more concessions. Having postponed his plan to declare independence on September 13, he can concede no more at this stage.

On the other hand, Mr. Barak's position is precarious and—with a single vote majority in the Knesset—any hint of a compromise could bring his government down when the legislature reconvenes in November. He will need a stronger mandate from the Israeli electorate if he wants to forge a real peace agreement. He has hinted at a deal that would leave the status of Jerusalem open, but that is not realistic: Without a formal agreement on Jerusalem, there can be no lasting peace in the Middle East.

Jerusalem is revered by Jews, Muslims, and Christians. When the talks at Camp David broke down last July, this was the issue on which neither side was willing to compromise. The Palestinians insist that East Jerusalem, captured by Israeli troops from Jordan in the Six Day War in 1967, should be the capital of their future independent state. The Israelis, however, regard the whole of Jerusalem as their sovereign territory and God-given indivisible capital.

Mr. Clinton was hoping that other Arab states would give Arafat the cover he needed to compromise on the status of Jerusalem and that the Israeli public, in a referendum on the issue, would prove more flexible than their elected politicians in the Knesset. But Mr. Arafat's credibility among his own people would collapse if he were to give up on the demand for East Jerusalem, and the Knesset would vote Prime Minister Barak's government out of office before allowing it to seek a deal that would not win parliamentary approval.

Mr. Barak has used his slim parliamentary majority as an excuse for not making concessions in the past, but he now must realize that his negotiating position would be strengthened if he could obtain a clear mandate from the Israeli public to forge a peace agreement. He is preparing to wage an early election campaign on a radically secular platform, writing off the ultra-Orthodox Shas and other religious parties as potential coalition partners. He is trying to appeal to Israel's secular majority by dismantling the Religious Affairs Ministry and giving Israel a written constitution which would diminish the power of the Orthodox establishment. If he succeeds, it will be good news for the "peace process," but—to Mr. Clinton's chagrin—the fruits of that success will belong to the next administration in Washington.

Some mixed-sovereignty formula that recognizes the competing claims on all or part of Jerusalem may eventually be devised, but it is unclear why Mr. Clinton thinks he is better qualified to find it than his successor. In the final months of his presidency, the Middle East "peace process" is at a standstill, but that is no great tragedy: All of Clinton's talk about "deadlines" and "last chances" was empty rhetoric. As an editorialist declared in the *Jordan Times*: "It is naive to expect that all the outstanding issues in this century-old conflict can be resolved in a matter of weeks or months. It is also politically irresponsible and morally wrong for leaders on both sides to substitute personal political timetables for international legal norms as the driving force for the negotiations."

Both Arabs and Israelis know that Mr. Clinton does not give a hoot for the justice, peace, or happiness of the people of the Holy Land. They don't mind the stalemate while the political landscape is being rearranged. The only party desperate for a quick deal was our disgraced President.

—*Srdja Trifkovic*

OBITER DICTA: Two articles in last month's issue ("Dare to Be a Daniela" by Harold O.J. Brown and "A Killing Privacy" by Thomas Fleming) mistakenly referred to *Stenberg* v. *Carhart*, the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning Nebraska's ban on partial-birth abortion, as *Nebraska* v. *Carhart*. We regret the error.

Paintings and sculpture by *Chronicles*' art director, **H. Ward Sterett**, will be on display at Octane Interlounge, 124 North Main Street in Rockford, from November 3 through December 1, 2000. If you're in the area, please stop by.

The Rockford Institute's Fourth Annual Summer School will be held July 24-28, 2001, at The Rockford Institute. We'll examine the rich political and literary heritage of the American Midwest, with special emphasis on Midwestern Copperheads, America Firsters, isolationists, Progressives, and Populists, and we'll read and discuss selected works of Sinclair Lewis, Booth Tarkington, Laura Ingalls Wilder, and Louis Bromfield.

The faculty will feature some familiar faces, including **Chilton Williamson, Jr.**, **Thomas Fleming**, and **Bill Kauffman**, as well as some new faces: *Chronicles*' assistant editor **Jeffrey Thomas Kuhner**, who is writing his doctoral dissertation on Robert A. Taft; and novelist and short-story writer **Anthony Bukoski**, who teaches Midwestern literature at the University of Wisconsin, Superior. Enrollment is limited, so mark your calendar now. Watch future issues of *Chronicles* for more details.

Our first poet this month is **Robert Beum**, who resides in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Dr. Beum's poems and essays have appeared in the *Sewanee Review*, *National Review*, the *Christian Century*, *Prairie Schooner*, and the *Southwest Review*, among others. His most recent book is *Inscriptions*, a collection of short poems, some of which have appeared in *Chronicles*.

Our second poet, **David Middleton**, is poet in residence at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana. His books of verse include *The Burning Fields* (LSU Press, 1991), *As Far As Light Remains* (The Cummington Press, 1993), and his latest, *Beyond the Chandeleurs* (LSU Press, 1999). Mr. Middleton's verse has appeared in many journals, including the *Sewanee Review* and the *Southern Review*. He serves as poetry editor for the *Anglican Theological Review* and the *Classical Outlook*.

Our art is provided by **Patrick Fitzgerald**, a native of Canada, who studied illustration at the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto. Before becoming a freelance illustrator, he worked for an advertising agency for two years. His clients have included the *Washington Post*, the U.S. Postal Service, Harcourt Brace, Scholastic, Penguin, and Oxford University Press. His work regularly appears in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*.

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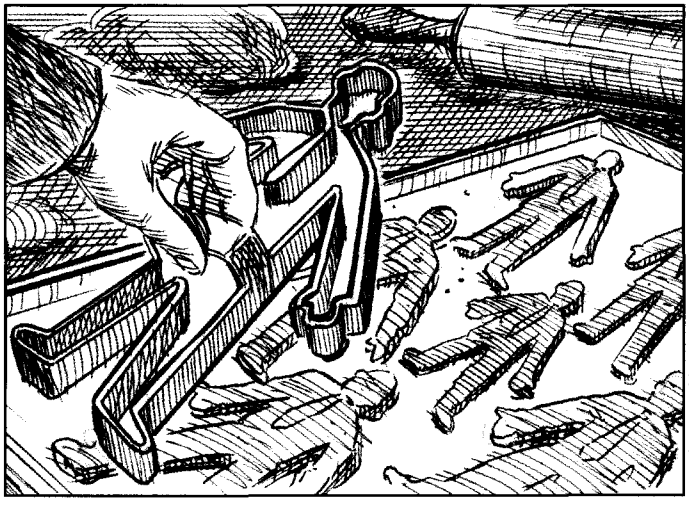
Patrick Fitzgerald

Vote Claudius: He'll Leave Your Sons Alone

by Thomas Fleming

When Edmund Burke called perfect democracy "the most shameful thing in the world," he was not referring to the mixed forms of popular government that had existed in ancient Greece and Rome, much less to the newly liberated English colonies that had been struggling to form "a more perfect union" on the Eastern seaboard of North America. These were constitutional governments in principle, and in practice (for the most part), they observed the rule of law. What Burke viewed with alarm was the French experiment in perfect democracy, based on the principles of equality, irreligion, and human rights. In striving to reach a moral perfection that lies beyond the limits of law and custom, radical democrats remove every obstacle to the total state. What Burke knew—and we knew once upon a time, though we have forgotten it—is that absolute democracy is absolute despotism.

When Americans speak of restoring or purifying their democracy, they generally have something like the government of Robespierre (or of the Paris Commune) in mind. Such fictive democracies have proved to be excellent vehicles for destroying civilization; and, if we discount misery and oppression, they have created nothing. People who descant upon the glories of democracy are like certain Catholics who would not trade places with the Apostles because, while Peter and James had known Jesus personally and suffered martyrdom, no one in those days had yet defined papal infallibility. This is putting the cart before the horse with a vengeance.

The best that has been claimed for democracy is that it is the least bad form of government. Although it may be difficult to trace the connections between genuinely democratic states, such as Athens in the fifth century B.C. and Switzerland in the 19th A.D., and the mixed republican governments of modern Europe and the United States, most people would say that, under popular government (a more descriptive term), the people are the ultimate foundation of sovereignty and that there are constitutional mechanisms (elections, ostracisms, referenda) by which the people can protect their interests and change their magistrates.

In America (as in Switzerland), the "democratic" genius of the people expressed itself in a firm commitment to state and local governments and in opposition to a standing army and a permanent bureaucracy. None of these commitments, in America at least, has survived the ordeal of the 20th century: We have imposed upon ourselves a vast apparatus of national government enforced by riot squads, national guard units, and domestic intelligence agencies; we pass referenda only to see them overturned by unelected and irresponsible judges; and every four years, about half of us try to choose the less dumb, less evil, and less crooked of the machine-rigged candidates presented to us by the two major parties.

H.L. Mencken wondered how, in a country this size, we could find no one more qualified than Calvin Coolidge. Mencken was justified in his contempt for Silent Cal—who now seems like a moral and intellectual giant compared with George W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Yes, Mr. Bush probably is less evil and less stupid than Mr. Gore, and there may be good reasons to hold your nose and vote Republican. But if you do, try not to deceive yourself into thinking that your vote has something to do with democracy or that Bush is better qualified than your next-door neighbor.

Actually, George Bush *is* preferable to my former next-door neighbor, the turncoat "conservative" Republican and apostle of world government, Rep. John Anderson, who now lives in leftist luxury somewhere in Florida, where he does not have to face cold winters or the sneers of the voters he betrayed.

Mr. Anderson, in running a third-party campaign in 1980, tried to help the left keep Ronald Reagan out of the White

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House. My experience of third-party candidates is not limited to this quasi-neighbor, who only showed up next door once or twice to sell the property (which, to show his contempt for his neighbors, he had allowed to become run-down and had rented out to what some neighbors called a biker gang) and to complain about my famous tall bushes. I know and esteem Harry Browne and Howie Phillips; Pat Buchanan is a friend and ally; and two of Pat's predecessors in the Reform Party—Gov. Dick Lamm and Adm. James Stockdale—have written several times for *Chronicles*.

The role of the party in American politics has been debated from the beginning. Parties were flourishing in Britain when the Constitution was being cobbled together in Philadelphia by the faction leaders and fixers who inserted no mention of parties into their design. Washington himself warned against the development of parties, even as Hamilton and Jefferson were at work dividing the nation. But even in Jefferson's administration, his brightest supporters showed their spirit by going into opposition to both the Federalists and Jeffersonians and forming the Tertium Quids.

The first real party, however, in the sense of being an organized vehicle of corruption that can coerce its members—including elected officials—into accepting the party's positions, was Martin Van Buren's reorganized Democratic Party. John C. Calhoun struggled in vain against the machine, and his integrity cost him the White House. The early emergence of the two-party system—informally in 1800, then a generation later as a pair of synchronized and well-oiled machines—has meant that the interesting action (for good and ill) in American politics has always come from third parties.

Some have been single-issue (like the Greenback Party) or single-candidate (e.g., John Anderson) movements; others have had longer legs, like the Progressives and Socialists or—most successful of all—the xenophobic, anti-Catholic Know-Nothings who regrouped on the slavery issue and helped to create the Grand Old Party. In their classic, non-partisan study of the American system, Willmoore Kendall and Austin Ranney expressed considerable skepticism about the virtues claimed for minor parties. They conceded, however, that "forming a third party has been and still is the indicated course of action for . . . any ethnic, class, sectional, or occupational group" which feels "that it has no chance whatsoever of getting attention for its demands from the major parties and the groups that support them." (In other words, all those who have neither bought into nor been sold into the system.) This suggests that the opportunity for any third party will come from Americans who pay taxes without receiving contracts and kickbacks; who do not belong to a designated minority group based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation; who adhere to the traditional religion (Christian), civilization (Western, classical, British), and morality (the common moral traditions of Christians, Jews, and European pagans).

Over the past decade, Ross Perot's Reform Party had some success in appealing to disgruntled, middle-class, European males, but Perot's lack of coherent principle—even more than his personal zaniness—kept his party an unfocused mob of loudmouthed malcontents. By supporting abortion, Perot excluded the religious and moral conservatives, and by advocating trade restrictions *and* open borders, he showed that his primary concern was with big business, not with the future of the American people. Pat Buchanan's vigorous attempt to refashion Perot's incense-and-adoration club into a genuine party has met with obstacles all along the way, some of them set up by Perot loyalists, others seeming to sprout naturally in the exotic hothouse of minority parties.

When, out of pure spite, some of the leading Perotistas were willing to support a professor of levitational physics at Maharishi U, the essential stupidity of Perot and his cult was exposed. When most of my friends were voting for Perot, I told them he was a dangerous megalomaniac who wanted to suspend constitutional law and make himself popular dictator; and when Dick Lamm set out to challenge Perot four years ago, I said the Reformers were setting up a smoke-and-mirrors show to give the illusion of democracy.

What a political sinkhole the Reform Party has been, sucking in the energies of dissent without producing a coherent challenge to the party state that has replaced republican government. Previous third party challenges—the Populists, the Progressives, the Socialists, the Wallace movement—all had principles and platforms that challenged the ruling party coalition. They were vehicles of protest, of course, but in standing for principles, they redirected political debate and, in the end, had more concrete influence than either of the major parties, which even in the 1890's were bastions of entrenched interests. Perhaps the third time is the charm, and the Buchananites who have taken over Perot's party can inject substance into the term—as hollow as a tract-home door—"reform."

Let us suppose that, by some strange mischance, Mr. Buchanan fails in his presidential bid. What are the prospects for breaking up the oligarchy and recreating some form of popular and republican government? About what they have been since 1945: none. In 1940, 1944, 1948, and 1952, at least, the Republicans could conceivably have gone into opposition by supporting someone like Sen. Robert Taft. They preferred people such as Willkie, Dewey, and Eisenhower, solid establishment men of no discernible principle, men who could have belonged to either party. (No one actually knew which party Ike adhered to, and Dewey was closer to FDR than he was to the supporters of "Mr. Republican.")

But George Bush is no Tom Dewey, much less a Calvin Coolidge, and Vice President Gore is a Washington lobbyist disguised as a window dummy. I cannot be the only American who has reached this conclusion: Only 17 percent of those eligible actually voted in the primaries in which the two candidates were supposedly chosen. The rest of us knew that the fix was in. It is not as if there were nothing at stake in an election that pits Haliburton against Occidental Petroleum.

Party politics has changed very little since the 18th century, when Robert Walpole perfected the system as an instrument of corruption, or since the Victorian age, when W.S. Gilbert described it as a sort of machine for sorting dullards:

> When in that house M.P.'s divide,
> If they've a brain and cerebellum too,
> They've got to leave that brain outside
> And vote just as their leaders tell 'em to.
> But then the prospects of a lot
> Of dull M.P.'s in close proximity
> All thinking for themselves is what
> No man can face with equanimity.

If Dennis Hastert and John Conyers had not joined parties, they might have had to make up their own minds without hav-

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ing anyone to pay them for not thinking. "Ignorance maketh most men go into a party," observed the generous Halifax, "and shame keepeth them from going out of it."

I speak from admittedly limited knowledge: My only real experience of presidential campaigning (apart from going door-to-door for Stevenson when I was 11) came in 1964. I was a college student and interested in two girls; one of them, who had fallen under the spell of a Yaffie admirer, persuaded me to march in a parade for Barry Goldwater; the other was an Irish Catholic and, therefore, a born Democrat. She was a Johnson girl and dragged me out to the airport to welcome Ladybird. The First Lady seemed a decent enough person to me, and on a whim I had rooted for Lyndon in the 1960 primaries. (Anybody but Jack, I felt back then and feel now.) On the other hand, Goldwater displayed more pep—though I thoroughly disliked the prissy didactic tone and convoluted rhetoric supplied by poor Barry's speechwriters, who lost him any hope of winning the election.

Let me be candid: I was not a Republican or a Democrat; I was neither liberal nor conservative. My party was the party of most young men—the Girls Party. Why else do men join parties, if not to satisfy their three basic desires: money, power, and women? If you are a Clinton or a Bush, you get all three, and if you are a Gore—under the thumb of an aging cheerleader who supports "family values" *and* a woman's "right to choose"—you have to settle for only one. (Even if elected, the Occi Petroleum lobbyist will wield no more power than, say, the younger Gordian.)

Whenever I contemplate the American political scene, Roman—not Greek—parallels come almost instinctively to mind. When Caligula—who preyed upon boys as well as girls—was overthrown by a conspiracy of his future victims, the senators seriously debated the prospects of reestablishing the republic. The Praetorian Guards had another idea and dragged out the dim-witted stutterer, Claudius, whose agents may have taken an active role either in the conspiracy to murder the emperor or in the Praetorian plot. Some of the senators were no doubt serious about restoring the republic, and some of them were to die, over the next generation, for their republican sentiments. Most of them, however, were as cowardly, treacherous, and self-indulgent as the Roman mob itself. How eager the senators were, remarked Tiberius on his accession to power, to be slaves.

I say nothing against my fellow citizens who have good reasons for supporting Al George or Gore Bush. If I had a business or an estate to protect, I would pull the straight GOP lever. But what of all the outcasts: the Christians; the shopkeepers and guys in the trades; the factory workers, black and white, whose jobs are being shipped off to Mexico or given away in Illinois to low-paid immigrants; the parents who once read Dickens and Shakespeare and are frightened at the prospect of their kids growing up on Toni Morrison and Kate Chopin? If they are green or pink, the losers have Ralph Nader—God bless him—to vote for; if they are "whites" in the Russian sense (that is, conservative Christians), they will turn out for Buchanan or Phillips; and if they are sturdy individualists, there is the estimable Harry Browne.

If all the minority parties can scrape up 25 to 30 percent of the total vote, then we shall not be wasting our time debating the future of the republic. Otherwise, let us accept with good grace the Claudius or Caligula whom the party praetorians select and get on with the perennial business of man. c

DICTATIONS

The People, No!

Nobody can define democracy, and if any honest man succeeded in doing so, the liars (always in the vast majority of mankind) would stone him to death for his pains. Democracy means, literally, rule by the people; or rather, as Roger Scruton puts it (in his very useful *Dictionary of Political Thought*), "by the people as a whole rather than by any section, class or interest within it." The trouble lies, as Scruton points out, with defining "who the people are, and which acts of government are truly 'theirs' . . ."

Most political theorists distinguish between direct and representative democracy, but that is like the difference between traditional Christianity and liberal Christianity—the one is real, the other a fake. Athenian direct democracy meant that the people ruled through popular institutions: the Assembly of citizens, the vast citizen juries that tried cases, and the ostracism of ambitious politicians. There was little bureaucracy and hardly any police to speak of. The Athenians did not trust elections, because they knew that wealth and influence would always play a decisive role in them, and they were highly skeptical of professionals who would presume to speak in their name. So far from creating a centralized establishment, the tiny Athenian *polis* was as decentralized as Switzerland, and most social regulation lay in the hands of the household, kin groups, and local neighborhoods. This has little to do with the centralized bureaucracy that runs the entire nation as if it were occupied territory.

In America, democracy referred originally to the mass of ordinary people and, secondly, to the political forms that expressed the popular will. Jefferson, who was in many respects an authentic classical republican, trusted neither the mob nor the Northeastern plutocracy with the power to direct other people's lives. His own vision, in his plans for public education and ward government, carries the principle of states' rights to its logical conclusion, bringing power back to the people who have to live under it. Jefferson undoubtedly thought he was wiser than his neighbors in matters of religion or on the South's peculiar institution, but he did not think that it was up to him to force them, much less the outlandish people living in Connecticut, to bow to his wishes.

Although most ordinary people cannot help being busybodies, the true principle of democracy can be summed up in a line by Hank Williams, Jr.: "If you'd mind your own business, then you won't be minding mine." This is the opposite of what is meant by democracy when it is discussed by practitioners of a purely academic philosophy. They hate Jefferson and prefer democracy in the style of Rousseau and Lenin, where, in the name of the people, the tiniest of oligarchies can monopolize the resources and power of 270 million people who surrender their liberties in every election with the eagerness of a chump handing in a lottery ticket with the wrong number.

—Humpty Dumpty

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"I'm Liberated; Free at Last!"

A Talk With Pat Buchanan

by Bill Kauffman

Patrick Fitzgerald

Pat Buchanan has taken more punches than Chuck Wepner, but unlike the Bayonne Bleeder, Buchanan has a good right hook (or is it now a left?) of his own.

The year began with Buchanan defending his feisty anti-interventionist manifesto A Republic, Not an Empire: *Not since the days of Arkansas Sen. William Fulbright, the one good Bill Arkansas has minted, had a major American politician used the e-word. Invited to join the Reform Party by the hirelings of Texas populist Ross Perot, Buchanan was sandbagged by the Perotistas when it became clear that, unlike Perot's 1996 competitor for the Reform nomination, he would not be a sacrificial Lamm. Buchanan defeated his principal foe for the Reform endorsement, transcendental-meditation apostle John Hagelin, before being laid low by gall-bladder-related problems.*

Bill Kauffman spoke with Buchanan as the convalescent candidate prepared to hit the campaign trail.

KAUFFMAN: Have you tried transcendental meditation for this gall bladder thing?

BUCHANAN (Chuckling): Well, it may be better for the stomach.

K: You get the worst press of any presidential candidate since George Wallace in '68. Why?

B: There are a couple of reasons. One is that we really stand up against the national media establishment on all issues, not just a few. Secondly, I've been a party to all of the great controversies of our time, and I've been on the other side from the national press in all of those controversies: Vietnam, court-ordered busing, the Supreme Court and its decisions on life and prayer. I supported the most unpopular war in American history and opposed the most popular.

In addition, I'm now challenging not only the liberal Democratic establishment, which I've fought all my life, but we've taken on also the Republican/conservative establishment. So I have no base of support whatsoever in the national media. Where I find my support is places like *Chronicles* and *Middle American News* and, to some degree, *Human Events* and *Southern Partisan*—which are, it is fair to say, not in the mainstream (Laughter).

K: You're the first presidential candidate in 75 years, since Bob La Follette, to try to put together a left-right coalition against involvement in foreign wars. Are you still sanguine about the possibility of left-right cooperation, or are you discouraged?

B: Let's separate Buchanan from Buchanan's beliefs and visions. Whatever happens to me, the ideas for which we are fighting right now are going to triumph. The American people are never again going to send a great army overseas to fight some bloody war that has no direct impact on the vital interests of the United States. We are an overcommitted nation that has half of the military power it had in 1990, but with far more commitments—from Eastern Europe to the Balkans to the Persian Gulf, even to the Taiwan Straits—than we had at the end of the Cold War.

The time is coming when the bankruptcy of U.S. foreign pol-

Bill Kauffman's books include America First! *and* Every Man a King, *a novel.*

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icy is going to be exposed, and when it is, the establishment will find that there is nothing behind their commitments. The American people don't understand them, don't know about them, and are going to be unwilling to pay for them with the blood of their sons. One of the stupidest things this country ever did was to miss the opportunity at the end of the Cold War to get rid of all these commitments which were designed for a global war against a hostile empire that no longer exists.

> "Whatever happens to me, the ideas for which we are fighting right now are going to triumph."

We're going to roll up this empire just the way the British and French did.

I'm very sanguine that we're going to win this battle one day. "America First" as a foreign policy is the only foreign policy that the American people will support over the long haul. You can get them ginned up for a crusade against the latest Hitler—Saddam Hussein in the Gulf—and you can even get them, though they were not enthusiastic, to support smashing a little country like Serbia that they don't know a thing about except what they read in the papers about them all being horrible people.

But I'll tell you, if you start taking casualties in great numbers, Americans will balk and resist.

K: Did your choice of Ezola Foster as a running mate indicate an abandonment of a left-right strategy? A lot of people expected you to take a labor Democrat.

B: We were looking over a lot of the labor Democrats, but I did make a solemn commitment that the individual would be pro-life. So when we chose Ezola Foster, it was not any abandonment of an effort to reach out to folks like the *Antiwar.com* folks, who support us primarily on foreign policy.

K: What did you learn from your dance with Lenora Fulani?

B: That alliance was basically a straight political deal where I would agree to support the campaign reforms that she recommended, and I did, and I still do, and she gave me her support.

But when the interests of her people in the various states collided with our interests, one after another, we defeated her people and tossed them out and put ours in. We were determined to get that nomination. No matter who was opposed to us, we would go in and defeat them. Because this is not a game for us and we're not going to put our future in the hands of anyone else.

I think she saw the Buchanan Brigades taking over the whole party nationally. So she came to me in New York and demanded to be chairman of the national Reform Party. I said, "Would you like some more corn flakes?" And it was all over. The *New York Times* wrote a story on it and did not even mention the fact that she had demanded to be chairman of the party.

K: They also refer to John Hagelin as a physicist.

B (Laughing): He saves a lot in airfares.

K: When you jumped to Reform, did you have any previous third-party models in mind?

B: No. I've read a great deal about third parties, and Governor Wallace was a friend of mine; I used to go visit him before he died. And I'm familiar with Norman Thomas and all the rest.

After I saw that we could move the crowd as well as I did at Ames, Iowa, but I simply couldn't afford running against seven different people, it seemed to me that I could not win the Republican Party nomination. So the question was, "Are we going to let the things we believe in die for lack of a champion, or are we going to go ahead and grab this party and try to make it an America First party?" And I said, "Why don't we just go ahead and do it?" At least the American people will have a chance to vote on these ideas.

What makes me very hopeful is that there was no majority for the war in the Balkans; the Senate barely got a majority for the war in the Gulf. NAFTA did not have majority support in this country, and neither did the Mexican bailout.

Now, because of the good economy and because everybody at least has got a job, even though they're nervous, people are saying, "Well, don't rock the boat. Buchanan may be right, but things look like they're pretty good to me. I don't like these deals either, but I've got a job." But a crunch has got to come.

And when it comes, the national establishment will find out that underneath it is an enormous hollow space. The country will not sustain the establishment. This whole damn New World Order is being put together for a lot of parasites, and the American people have no emotional interest in it; they tend to go along with it until they're going to be asked to make some major contribution to sustain it. They're going to say, "Why do we want all this stuff?" At that point, I think they'll say, "What was that guy's name back there? Buchanan."

K: In your famous interview with Norman Mailer in *Esquire* in 1996, Mailer kept urging you to quit the Republicans. The Republicans are the Corporation, said Mailer, and they'll kill you before they'll let you have the nomination. Was Norman right?

B: Yup (Laughter). Norman was right. My problem is that I am very, very loyal to institutions and things I've been attached to. And it's very, very hard for me to break. My sister has no problem with that (Laughter).

K: Some had hoped that the Reform Party would become a broad-based populist movement united around anti-globalist causes and political reform. Ross Perot might represent its center, you its right, and someone like Ralph Nader or Jerry Brown its left. Is that a possibility anymore?

B: It sure is to me. The whole New World Order: These are much stronger issues with me than they ever were with Ross. Ross was very strong on the trade issue, as I am; but in terms of bringing the troops home and defunding these global institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, I think I'm stronger.

I was out there in Seattle, and what you've got to realize is that many on the left think the IMF and the World Bank aren't generous enough. Many of them don't mind the World Trade Organization as long as it will do their will. But I'm for bringing these things down.

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Folks who want to restore American independence, wherever they are on the spectrum, are welcome. Now some won't come to me because I'm pro-life. But that is simply who I am. And I am not walking away from those folks or that vision or that ideal or the idea that we ought to alter the Supreme Court and decentralize government dramatically.

States' rights: I think the survival of our country lies in this idea, where states can be different from other states, and the feds don't impose one rule upon the whole nation from the Supreme Court. Folks vote in each state as to how they want to live and what values and traditions they want respected and supported in law. That's the way it was originally intended for a great democratic republic; we would be a very diverse people. I don't mind the fact that I don't have a right to impose my values on Greenwich Village, but I don't want Greenwich Village imposing its values on me.

K: My impression is that the Buchanan Brigades are much more libertarian than is commonly believed. Maybe a third of your convention delegates, for instance, would have supported calling off the national drug war. Is there room for anti-drug war people in a Buchananite Reform Party?

B: Yup, there's room for them. I don't know that we would adopt that posture, but let me tell you, my friend Lyn Nofziger told me, when he endorsed me as a Republican, that he had gotten marijuana for his daughter, who was dying at the time, and that I ought to know that because it was common knowledge. I said, "Well, that doesn't bother me in the least." If I were a prosecutor, I would say, "That's pretty far down the list in terms of things we're going to prosecute in this office. We've got more important things to look at than that."

I understand the libertarian argument on drugs; I don't agree with it, Bill, and I'll tell you why. I went in Iowa to one of these centers for gals who had been pregnant and on drugs but had cleaned up their act. It was both a daycare center and sort of a home where they would come at night; they had jobs. These little toddlers were all slopping down their cereal. It was very funny and very pleasant.

I asked the fellow there, "Did these kids suffer any permanent damage?" And he said ten percent of the kids in Iowa are born of mothers who are drug-afflicted, and half of those kids never fully recover from the impact of that.

These little kids are simply growing up with a horrible existence. And I'm afraid if you decriminalize or legalize narcotics . . . it's not a victimless crime.

K: But the same argument was always made about alcohol during Prohibition: You're really doing it for the children, because drunkards are bad parents.

B: There's no doubt that alcoholism is a serious problem, but I know friends who have been alcoholics, and some of them are dead after 30 years; and I've known kids who have been drug addicts, and they were dead in their early 20's.

K: Do you sympathize with the move to make marijuana legal for medical purposes?

B: That's a state-by-state decision.

K: Although as soon as a state approves legalization, the Republicans want to send the feds in.

B: In violation of their states' rights precepts. On that one, if the state votes the decision, I think you have to respect it. On the federal level, although I can see what's happening down in Colombia, I just am not ready to give up on the drug war because I think the other side would be worse. Maybe I'm wrong.

> "I'm not going back to the Republican Party: I'm liberated; free at last!"

K: You mentioned *Antiwar.com*. Justin Raimondo, its editor, is one of your most eloquent and tireless champions.

B: He's wonderful. Justin nominated me.

K: Justin is a good guy. He is also openly gay. Would that fact disqualify him from a spot in a Buchanan administration?

B: No. Look, Justin is not someone who runs around the country advocating the gay-rights agenda; he's opposed to it. He believes in freedom. He's opposed to the idea of using federal power to say that people have to hire him whether they like him or not. He is a homosexual, and I don't know how people get that way, but he's a very loyal guy to me. I have two people who have been "outed" who have been very supportive of me in three campaigns, and I'm proud to have their support because it probably takes a hell of a lot more moral courage for them to support me, especially where Justin lives, than it does for folks elsewhere.

You know what he said when I issued a strong statement? He said, "Who gives a damn if I can't be ambassador to Luxembourg?" (Laughter).

K: The two parties have their Hollywood partisans: Barbra Streisand for the Democrats and Bo Derek for the Republicans, now that Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., has retired. Who are the Hollywood Buchananites?

B: Virginia Mayo . . . most of them are from the previous generation.

K: I heard that Mel Gibson was a supporter.

B: No, I wouldn't say that. Don't end *The Patriot*'s career! (Laughter). I think Mel Gibson probably comes out of a traditional Catholic, pre-Vatican II upbringing, and he shares a lot of these values and beliefs and his great love of patriotism and the warrior virtues and things of the Scotch-Irish. We have a lot in common, but don't put that anchor around this guy's neck. I want to see more of his movies (Laughter).

K: How do we bust up the concentration of media ownership?

B: You have to use the antitrust laws, and I'd certainly be prepared to. Newspapers, for example, should be owned by Amer-

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icans.

I'm not sure what Bill Gates did to me to be attacked by the antitrust division of the Department of Justice. As far as I know, he tried to give me a free browser. Microsoft is a national asset. If they did something wrong, fine them, and tell them, "Don't do it again." But don't smash up this company.

> "*Chronicles* has been to me, in the last ten years, what *National Review* was in the very early 1960's, with this difference: *Chronicles* repeatedly comes to my defense."

Take a look at what's far more dangerous: a concentration of power, in which a handful of companies get control of the mechanism by which ideas and information and political news are spread throughout a society of 270 million people.

I thought CNN was a great idea, and frankly I didn't like the idea of it merging with [Time-Warner], and now they're going to merge with AOL. Two or three people in the country are going to be able to decide the career, or the noncareer, of virtually every journalist and columnist and commentator in America. They'll be able to kill all but the biggest, like a Rush Limbaugh; and even there they have enormous power. So I do believe in maximum decentralization of the media.

K: What about requiring radio and TV licensees to live in the cities in which they have licenses?

B: I think that's a great idea. You should have some kind of preference in the law for folks who live in the town, because these absentee landlords sit up there and own 85 or 100 newspapers and they don't give a hoot about what's going on in Podunk, as long as the *Podunk News* makes money. They go out there and reformat it and put their bingo games in, and it ceases to be a community newspaper.

If every radio station and every newspaper were owned by people who lived in the town, it would be far better than these giant media conglomerates.

K: Have you lost any friends over your defection from the Republican Party?

B: There weren't all that many to lose, Bill (Laughter). I'm not a great socialite around D.C., never have been. I can't think of anybody who was a great personal friend who is not now.

K: Have you ever talked to Dick Lamm about his treatment by the Perot people in '96?

B: No, I have not, but somebody I know talked to him. This is one reason we've got the fight with the Perot people. We saw what was done to Lamm, and early on we picked up signs that the Dallas people, in giving us advice on whom to support and not to support, and whether to get on the ballot as the Reform Party or as an individual, were making decisions and giving us counsel that would leave them with the capacity to take it away from us, if they so chose.

So we decided to follow our own strategy and make sure I went to Long Beach with an insurance policy of two-thirds of all delegates. We started to act deliberately and consciously in our interest, making our own decisions, doing what was best for us. When they offered advice we would say "Thanks," and we might accept it if we thought it was consistent with our interests, and if it wasn't, we would do what we wanted to do. That's why, for example, when we were asked by them to go down and get the Reform Party on the ballot in Texas, we said "No, we're going to get me on the ballot in Texas." If we had gotten the Reform Party on the ballot in Texas, I'm sure there would have been an effort to give that line to Hagelin.

This is the source of the great conflict with Dallas; it's got nothing to do with social issues. They knew exactly where I stood on those when I joined.

K: You famously threw punches at a Washington policeman as a young man, and you have a pugilistic image. Were you tempted to throw any punches during the Reform Party convention?

B: No, I was thinking of my coming surgery (Laughter). Somebody might have punched me in the stomach, and that would have been it. At the Reform Party convention, I told all our people, "Look, be sweet, be nice—no punches thrown," because we won. When you win, it's the guys that are losing that throw the first punch.

K: Do you expect that, in 2002, Reform will field Buchananite candidates for governorships and Senate and House seats and such?

B: That would be the clear plan, but we have to see how well we do and how well I am. But here's the thing: This is a long-term commitment. I'm not going back to the Republican Party: I'm liberated; free at last! (Laughter).

K: Could you see yourself supporting Reform candidates in 2002 who are with you on most issues but not abortion?

B: That's where I have a real problem. I have a problem defeating a candidate who has stood up for right-to-life, which takes great courage these days. If my guy supports life and the other Buchanan things, of course I can support him, even against a conservative Republican.

People say, "That's an impediment, Pat; you can never put together a coalition as long as you believe that." Well, if that's true, that's true, and there's nothing I can do about that. But I'm not changing.

K: What if they disagree with you on decentralist grounds, saying, "Look, there should not be a federal law against partial-birth abortion; this should be legislated at the local level."

B: Do they agree *Roe* v. *Wade* should be overturned?

K: Presumably.

B: If they take a stand that *Roe* v. *Wade* should be overturned,

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and it should be returned to the states, I think that's a pro-life position.

K: What do you expect will be your place in American political history? Harbinger, gadfly . . . ?

B: I've had a phenomenal run in my life. I came into politics at just the right time. I was on the Goldwater right, an editorial writer, and in my heart I went through that whole crushing defeat. I was the first one to arrive in Richard Nixon's office in 1965. I was with Nixon in the entire run-up into the White House all the way through China and the summits and '72, and with him that very day when he left in the helicopter.

You know, I thought that my political career had ended then. And then I went into journalism, and I had a great ten-year run, and Ronald Reagan brought me into the White House. I was there at Rejkavik and all those summits, and I was in the White House during the heyday of the conservative movement. I supported Bush, I went back and had a great career in journalism, and then I almost knocked off the President of the United States in New Hampshire. I gave a memorable speech at the Republican Convention, probably the most controversial of the 20th century. And then four years later, we were the sensation of 1996, until we were overwhelmed by the Republican establishment. I'm the only journalist that ever won the New Hampshire primary.

It was a great run, and now I've taken this course. . . . You know, they've buried me ten times (Laughter). We've got a couple more lives left.

I've had a wonderful life. I'll tell you, Bill, being out there building this party from scratch and fighting all these battles in one state after another—it's a wonderful experience. I thought I was 20 years old again. It was one of the wisest and best decisions I've ever made.

Why would I want to be up there in Philadelphia, held in confinement like the rest of the conservatives in the basement somewhere at George Bush's convention? And being trotted out in front of the cameras to say "this represents the restoration of Reaganism" (Laughter). I can't do it anymore.

It's been a hell of an interesting life. I'm in tough shape physically right now, and I'm a 100-to-1 shot, but I'm in the final four (Laughter).

K: How influential has *Chronicles* been in your political evolution over the last ten years?

B: *Chronicles* has been to me, in the last ten years, what *National Review* was in the very early 1960's, with this difference: *Chronicles* repeatedly comes to my defense. Of course, the only defense I needed in the early 60's was legal (Laughter).

K: What spot will Sam Francis have in the Buchanan Cabinet?

B: I'd have him hanging around the White House (Laughter). He would be the Secretary of Heritage.

K: Maybe he can be in charge of the anti-tobacco campaign in the Buchanan administration.

B: That's right: Surgeon General!

c

Screech Owl in Jubilee

by David Middleton

Its crackling talons clasping icy wires
Strung taut between mimosas and an oak
Within whose hollow bole December eggs
Break open cold in January sun
While copper hums both ways with human sounds,
A brown screech owl with those straight-ahead eyes,
Flat-faced, now twists its flexible neck around
When Roman candles flare blue, green, and gold
And hissing sparklers darken like the stars
Shooting out of the limbs of Yggdrasil
And fireworks burst—a universe of light
That arcs back into blackness at its height.

And in that very night where light expires
The owl discerns still moving blind and warm
Over the frosted shadows of the grass
The star-nosed mole, pine mouse, and meadow mouse
So unaware as softest feathers spread
Descending in their silence till a beak
And talons clamped on gullet, neck, and spine
Bring prey into a nest of wide-mouthed young
That gulp down quivering bits whose dregs become
Regurgitated gristle, skin, and skull.
And not far from these things that have to be—
A sky afire—millennial Jubilee.

Bright moon-stained eyes observe the human scene:
Trayed candles hung from live oaks in the park
Wind-swung into galactic attitudes
Like those whose beer suds up in astral foam
When *Auld Lang Syne* is transposed into strains
Of endless vistas blossoming in light
Up mountain pastures rising toward the sun
Where shepherds pipe their flocks to kingdom come.
Yet there between mimosas and an oak,
Swept by the dreaded plectrum All-Must-Die,
The screech owl's quavering omen of a cry
Floats through the fluid roots of earth and sky.

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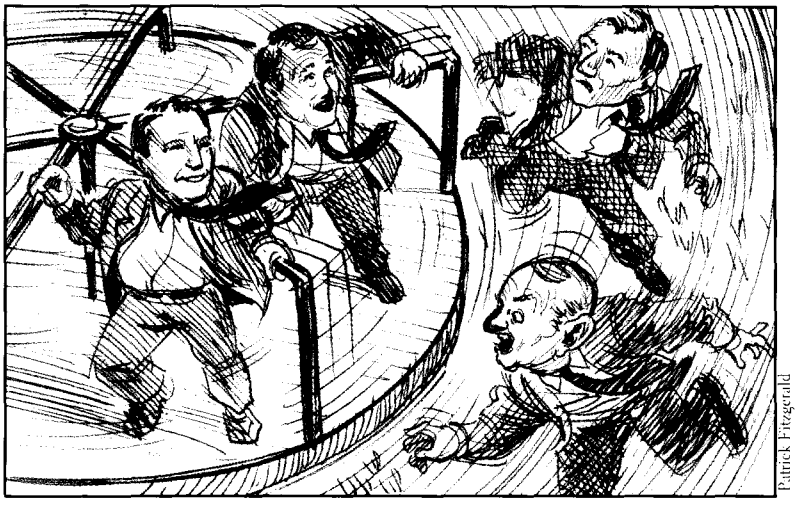
Sleepwalking in America

Buchanan and Nader Seek the Balance of Power

by Greg Kaza



Patrick Fitzgerald

For the third time in our generation, independent voters could be the balance of power in this year's presidential election. In 1968, Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace, standard-bearer of the American Independent Party, received 13 percent of the popular vote, a sum greater than the difference between Hubert H. Humphrey and the victor, Richard M. Nixon. In 1992, billionaire entrepreneur H. Ross Perot and his Reform Party garnered 19 percent of the vote, greater than the margin between President George Bush and the winner, Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton. Although it appears unlikely that either Reform Party candidate Patrick J. Buchanan or Green Party nominee Ralph Nader will equal the showing of Wallace or Perot, their combined vote, drawn mainly from political independents, could reach double digits in some swing states, thus tilting the election's outcome and contributing to a long and often overlooked tradition in American politics.

One-third of presidential elections since 1824 have been decided by independent voters and third parties or candidates (1824, 1844, 1848, 1856, 1860, 1876, 1880, 1884, 1888, 1892, 1912, 1916, 1948, 1960, 1968, and 1992). In two of those races (1824 and 1876), the independents forced the outcome into the House of Representatives. Neither of those victors (John Quincy Adams in 1824 and Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876) won a majority of the popular vote; in fact, Adams received less than *one-third* of the popular vote. In 1888, Democratic incumbent Grover Cleveland polled nearly 100,000 more votes than Republican Benjamin Harrison but still lost the presidency in the Electoral College.

Greg Kaza served three terms in the Michigan House of Representatives (1993-1998). He returned to his native Midwest recently after working on Capitol Hill analyzing the voting patterns of members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Although largely forgotten today, George Wallace's strategy in 1968 was to deprive the major parties of an electoral majority and decide the election in the Electoral College, not the House of Representatives. He obtained affidavits from his electors promising to vote for Wallace "or whomsoever he may direct." But Nixon and Humphrey refused to negotiate with Wallace. Both said the election, if necessary, should be decided in the House. Nevertheless, if Nixon had been held to fewer than 270 electoral votes, Wallace could have assumed the role of kingmaker. This did not occur, although Wallace did win 46 electoral votes in the Deep South. Perot, by comparison, did not win any, nor will Buchanan or Nader.

Yet history shows that third-party candidates need not win states to have an impact on the political process. Wallace's most enduring influence was in reshaping American politics *after* the election. Nixon and, to a greater extent, Ronald Reagan co-opted Wallace's supporters by stressing socially conservative issues. Third parties are most powerful when one of the two major parties is compelled to adopt their platform.

Examples abound in U.S. history, many involving populist economic, trade, and monetary issues. The 1892 Populist platform, which emphasized free silver and opposition to the gold standard, was co-opted four years later by William Jennings Bryan and the Democrats. Grover Cleveland, elected president in 1892 for the second time, was the last pro-gold Democrat. Populist support peaked that year when presidential nominee Gen. James B. Weaver received 8.5 percent of the vote; he won four states and cost Cleveland three.

The Populists lost the election, but their ideas prevailed over the long term. The 1892 Populist platform stated:

> The national power to create money is appropriated to enrich bond-holders; a vast public debt payable in legal

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tender currency has been funded into gold-bearing bonds, thereby adding millions to the burden of the people. Silver, which has been accepted as coin since the dawn of history, has been demonetized to add to the purchasing power of gold by decreasing the value of all forms of property as well as human labor, and the supply of currency is purposely abridged to fatten usurers, bankrupt enterprise and enslave industry.

By 1896, the Democratic platform read:

> Recognizing that the money question is paramount to all others at this time . . . demonetizing silver without the knowledge or approval of the American people has resulted in the appreciation of gold and a corresponding fall in the prices of commodities produced by the people; a heavy increase in the burdens of taxation and of all debts, public and private; the enrichment of the money-lending class at home and abroad; the prostration of industry and impoverishment of the people.

Eugene V. Debs stood four times for president as a Socialist; he peaked in 1912 with six percent of the popular vote. Yet so much of the 1912 Socialist Party platform was later adopted by the Democrats that, by the time of FDR's election in 1932, some socialists declared victory. The 1912 platform called for a ban on child labor, a minimum wage, worker's compensation, and a government pension system for the elderly. Although the Democratic Party was silent on those issues in 1912, it later adopted each Socialist plank. The Socialist vote frightened the Democrats: In 1916, Woodrow Wilson was reelected in a narrow race made even closer by Socialist Allen L. Benson, who achieved a balance of power with three percent of the vote.

The Socialists of the early 20th century succeeded on a scale much greater than the Libertarians who emerged in the century's last quarter. The Libertarians have never attained more than one percent of the vote because they do not practice serious politics. Today's Greens and Reformers are at least trying. Their greatest long-term impact will most likely come after November, if the major party that loses the race for the White House co-opts their issues. Until Nader entered the race, this was unlikely: George Bush or Al Gore could have won without Buchanan achieving a balance of power. Co-optation is far more likely after a four-way race. If Bush wins, the Democrats will feel pressure to adopt Green issues. Should Gore win, the Republicans will face similar pressure to co-opt Buchanan's Reform message. By contrast, the Libertarian Party would never engage in such *realpolitik*.

Since Perot received one in five votes cast in the 1992 election, both major parties have co-opted Reform's message of balanced budgets and campaign-finance reform. Mainstream-media liberals and Beltway conservatives agree publicly on one point: Perot is a (take your pick) "kook," "nut," or "wacko." However, these analysts are sleepwalking when they allow their personal hostility toward a successful businessman (as with the liberals) or their desire for cushy, well-paying jobs in a Republican administration (as with the conservatives) to cloud their judgment. Establishment conservatives, desperate for federal positions after eight years of the Clinton-Gore administration, are withholding criticism of George W. Bush's pork-barrel spending proposals. Many are holdovers from the first Reagan administration, eager to work again for the federal government. "They came to Washington to clean up the cesspool," a well-known conservative wag once observed, "but decided after spending some time that it resembled more a hot tub." These conservatives have been the most vociferous critics of Perot and Buchanan.

The professional strategists who actually win elections know otherwise: Think of Perot every time Bill Clinton talks about "budget surpluses" or Sen. John McCain pushes "campaign-finance reform." To some degree, Perot can claim victory: Both major parties have co-opted Reform issues, and no other non-politician in U.S. history who sought the presidency on a third-party ticket received such a high percentage of the vote. (Whig-American candidate Millard Fillmore in 1856 and Bull Moose Progressive Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 achieved higher percentages, but both had previously occupied the White House.)

> Our millionaire culture is one of the greatest sales jobs in American history.

Buchanan's legacy is also assured, whatever the outcome in November. Buchanan will be remembered for the damage he inflicted on President George Bush in the 1992 Republican primaries. (Sen. Eugene McCarthy did similar damage to Lyndon Johnson in 1968, forcing him to withdraw from the race.) Nor are the most important issues raised by Buchanan and Nader—American interventionism, trade, and immigration—going to disappear. Millions of Americans living outside the Beltway are affected by these issues, and they are not going away—despite being ignored by the sleepwalkers.

But Buchanan and Nader are operating at a severe disadvantage. Neither has held elective public office. The most successful third-party candidates (except for Perot) held office before or during their candidacies: Martin Van Buren (1848), Fillmore (1856), John C. Breckinridge and John Bell (1860), Roosevelt (1912), Robert La Follette (1924), and Wallace (1968). No other third-party candidate since 1824 has achieved a double-digit percentage of the vote. Henry Clay and William Crawford reached double digits in 1824, but like the winner, John Quincy Adams, and the runner-up, Andrew Jackson, they were regional candidates of the now-defunct Democratic-Republican Party. Breckinridge was nominated by the Southern Democrats, who demanded that the Democratic Party include a plank stating that slavery would be protected not only in the South but in the U.S. territories. Breckinridge was Vice President at the time, and he received 18 percent of the vote. Bell was nominated by the Constitutional Union Party, created in 1859 by factions of the Whig and American (Know-Nothing) parties. A former U.S. senator from Tennessee who had also served as speaker of the house, Bell received 12.6 percent on a platform that emphasized preservation of the Union. Van Buren, a former U.S. president, was picked by the anti-slavery Free Soil Party, and received ten percent. The 1948 election is sometimes cited by pundits as an example of third-party influence. But States' Rights (Dixiecrat) nominee Strom Thurmond received only 2.4 percent, and Progressive Henry Wal-

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lace even less.

A Senator Buchanan from Virginia or a Representative Nader from Connecticut would probably fare better in November. Both also face onerous ballot-access laws, which the major parties use to restrict political competition. A considerable amount of a third party's resources are spent on qualifying for the ballot. This is money that is unavailable for advertising and get-out-the-vote drives in the fall. Still, ballot-access laws were used in 1860 to keep Republican nominee Abraham Lincoln off a quarter of the state ballots, but in a four-way race, he was able to achieve victory.

Denied the possibility of electoral votes and the status afforded by public office, the best prospects for Buchanan and Nader remain in the swing states that will decide the election. A strong performance by Nader in California could cost Gore the White House, while a good showing by Buchanan in the Rust Belt states of Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania could prevent Bush from avenging his father's defeat in 1992.

In two books published in the 1990's (*Arrogant Capital: Washington, Wall Street and the Frustration of American Politics* and *Boiling Point: Democrats, Republicans and the Decline of Middle-Class Prosperity*), Kevin Phillips describes many of the issues that appeal to today's independents. These issues could be exploited by a shrewd populist, either from the left or the right. But this year? In mid-2000, Phillips wrote:

> If Buchanan focuses on the populist, nationalist, isolationist and cultural right, his potential 8 percent to 12 percent of the vote would come largely from Bush and the Republicans. The 1990s trend within the Group of Seven major Western industrial nations has been for breakaway right-wing or right-center populist parties to undermine governing conservative coalitions: the radical right in Italy and France, and the Reform parties in both Canada and the United States. Buchanan might hope for a similar role. If Nader outscores Buchanan, Gore becomes the clear underdog. But if Buchanan builds a European-style party with overtones of nationalism, isolationism and anti-immigrant politics, plus elements of the Christian right, Bush is probably the one in trouble.

This is the optimistic view.

The biggest obstacle faced by both Buchanan and Nader is the public's perception that the economy is booming and we are living in prosperous times. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, there were 20 recessions during the 20th century, and only a handful occurred in a presidential election year. Third-party candidates have always fared better in times of economic uncertainty or recession—Perot in 1992 being the most recent example. It is more difficult to convince voters to cast ballots against the Democrats and Republicans when they believe they are prospering. Many Americans are convinced that they will become millionaires because of an unprecedented bull market. Our millionaire culture is one of the greatest sales jobs in American history. It manifests itself not only among those using their personal computers to trade on Wall Street but also in popular TV shows such as *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?*, *Who Wants To Marry A Millionaire?*, and (my nominee for most honest title) *Greed*.

The bull is running despite a veritable flow of U.S. government reports documenting the decline of high-wage manufacturing jobs; the increase of low-paying, part-time service-sector positions; the elimination of true middle-class pensions (defined benefit plans, not portable 401Ks); and dangerous consumer debt levels.

In a recent issue of *Forbes*, Peter Brimelow uses government data to report that interest on consumer debt—*excluding mortgage interest*—as a share of disposable (after-tax) income has reached an unprecedented level: The Federal Reserve estimates that, in 1998, average family debt-service burden, including interest and principal, was 14.5 percent, up from 12.7 percent in 1989. "This unprecedented burden now exists despite the fact that disposable income has been increasing rapidly and consumer credit is no longer tax-deductible," Brimelow notes. More ominously, this debt has piled higher during a period of disinflation, with falling interest rates and bond yields. (The yield on the bellwether 30-year U.S. Treasury bond fell more than 1,000 basis points from its peak in the early 1980's.

The sleepwalkers discount rising consumer debt, preferring to view it "as a percentage of some other statistic" that is also rising. But the real debt burden will become clear when interest rates rise or a recession ensues. "As a fraction of disposable personal income . . . ," Brimelow writes, "total household debt was typically 60 to 70 percent until the early 1980s. Since then it has risen steadily. In 1999 (third quarter) the ratio stood at 95 percent." Some who are assuming these debt levels are engaging in conspicuous consumption, living beyond their economic means. But many others, especially in the industrial heartland, have been forced to do so to sustain the pretense of a middle-class lifestyle. Their debt burdens will become difficult, if not impossible, to maintain during the next recession; when that contraction hits, they are more likely to vote for an economic populist who offers change.

Bush and the Republicans are counting on "the investor class" to defeat Gore. A populist Capitol Hill staffer observes, "Republicans really believe that what is good for Wall Street is good for America." They may succeed in this election, but they cannot repeal the business cycle. Sleepwalker claims of a "New Paradigm" notwithstanding, the current economic expansion will eventually end in a recession.

Which candidate—Buchanan or Nader—made the following remark about the World Trade Organization? "The WTO undermines our legitimate local, state, and national sovereignties." Which one made the following statement about NAFTA? "The elitist architects of GATT and NAFTA have locked arms with their corporate cohorts to support a trade policy that is neither fair nor free." (Nader made the former statement, Buchanan the latter.) If Nader and Buchanan combined can achieve double-digits in key swing states, the biggest surprise will occur after the election: the emergence of a new populist coalition or fusion of ideas, if not a merger of the Green and Reform parties. History shows co-optation will follow.

The People, No

by Robert Beum

The People chose Barabbas, Clinton, Mao,
And might choose government if they knew how.

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Taking Stock

The Rise of a Canadian Third Party

by Kevin Michael Grace

Patrick Fitzgerald

Sir John A. Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada, was a Conservative. He is remembered chiefly for his love of alcohol and his hatred of free trade. Brian Mulroney, the last elected Conservative prime minister, foreswore alcohol when he reckoned (correctly) that he could surmount the greasy pole (just like George W. Bush) and embraced free trade when he reckoned (again, correctly) that this tactic would split the opposition and ensure his re-election. Mulroney was the only Conservative to win two consecutive majorities in the 20th century, but in so doing, he transformed his party into a mirror image of its great rival, the Liberals—and thereby shattered it. And after a decade-long false start, the Conservative base has found a new home—in the Canadian Alliance.

The virtual collapse of the Conservatives in 1993 ensured consecutive majority governments for Jean Chrétien's Liberal Party. Chrétien—like Mulroney and Chrétien's mentor, Pierre Trudeau—is committed to the New Canada myth of the "proposition nation": Canada as a wholly materialist entity, with no unique culture nor any traditions worth preserving, its value based entirely on the judgment of foreigners.

For the seventh year in a row, Canada has ranked first in the U.N. Development Program's quality-of-life index. It is amusing to think of Canadians responding with shouts of "We're No. 1! In your face, USA!"—and depressing to admit this is precisely what has happened. Although there is not a person alive who can explain the U.N.'s methodology, this has not stopped Prime Minister Chrétien from boasting at every conceivable opportunity that Canada is "the best country in the world." (That is, when he is not regaling us with accounts of his imaginary conversations with the homeless or with "ordinary Canadians" in pubs and donut shops he has never visited.)

Canadians are divided linguistically, ethnically, and geographically, but the most important distinction is between those who believe Canada is the best country in the world *because the United Nations says so* and those who do not. Those in the first group are the natural, perhaps only, supporters of the Liberal Party (which is not so much a political party as a governing institution, like Mexico's PRI). Those in the second group are the natural supporters of Stockwell Day's Canadian Alliance.

Day, until recently Alberta's finance minister, is the first avowedly conservative leader of a major national Canadian party in living memory. He is not only a "fiscal" conservative—we are all fiscal conservatives now—but a "social" conservative as well: pro-life and anti-gay rights. He has made a direct appeal to what might be called (after Sam Francis) "Middle Canadians,"

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promising them that if elected, he will put a stop to the unconstitutional aggrandizement of the welfare state, pursued aggressively by every Canadian government since Trudeau came to power in 1968. He has also promised to end social engineering by the courts, which began when Trudeau imposed a written bill of rights in 1982. To the horror of the elites, Day insists that Canada is more than a U.N. ranking, more than the sum of its "sacred" (Mulroney's word) social-safety net. Day offers a choice, not an echo. In response, the national newsweekly *Maclean's*, in best "threat or menace?" style, headlined its first cover story on Day, "How scary?"

> Stockwell Day is the first avowedly conservative leader of a major national Canadian party in living memory.

The same claims were made about another Canadian political leader, Preston Manning. But to understand why Manning was never a threat to the establishment, we need to consider his Reform Party (the Alliance's predecessor) and why it failed.

Reform was founded in 1987, mostly by disgruntled Conservatives and Western separatists willing to give Canada another chance, and as a solution to the alienation of the West, whose wealth is confiscated for the benefit of the more populous East. (Note the striking similarity to Umberto Bossi's Lega Nord.) Its first slogan was "The West Wants In." What Manning wanted, however, was something else. The party originally represented only the Western provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba; but in 1991 Manning persuaded party members to take it national. This eliminated its *raison d'être* but allowed Manning the possibility of becoming prime minister. He continued to campaign for structural reform, specifically an American-style Senate and direct democracy in the form of referenda and citizen initiatives.

Despite Reform's successes in the elections of 1993 and 1997 (when it became the official opposition), it won only one seat in Eastern Canada in 1993 (when the ruling Conservatives were reduced to two seats) and none in 1997. Reform twice managed no better than 19 percent of the vote in Ontario, equal with the Conservatives. This vote-splitting allowed the Liberals in both elections to capture almost every Ontario seat; in 1997, they took 101 of 103 seats there and thus won a parliamentary majority with only 38 percent of the national vote. (Quebec continues to be dominated by the separatist Bloc Quebecois. Yet with the passage of the Clarity Act, which dictates secession conditions, the Liberals have removed fear of separation—what Peter Brimelow named "the Patriot game"—from the political agenda. The moribund Conservatives hold 15 seats, the socialist New Democrats 19.)

Manning never understood that his triumphs in the West, where Reform became the leading party, were due to regional alienation, not to any great fondness for systemic restructuring. It never made sense that Eastern Canadians would vote Reform: Ontario and Quebec together command an absolute majority in the House of Commons, and they like the system the way it is. Other parties would have dealt with this problem by selecting a new leader, but Manning persuaded party members that the fault was not with him but with Reform's regional "image." The result was the Canadian Alliance: a merger between Reform and disaffected federal and provincial Conservatives that was Manning's attempt to reconstruct the very national coalition he had deconstructed in 1987.

Received wisdom is that Manning failed in Ontario because his "scary" social conservatism frightened the supposedly liberal Ontario electorate, but this profoundly misjudges the man. Despite his personal beliefs, which are almost identical to Day's, Manning refused to appeal to natural Reform supporters—blue-collar workers, European immigrants, Catholics—because he refused to admit that politics is a zero-sum game.

Described routinely by the Canadian and foreign media as a "conservative," Manning was nothing of the sort, as he was the first to point out. He was a "populist," and he liked to compare Reform to a hockey team, which has a left wing, a right wing, and a center. He was described as a "policy wonk," but his real obsession was process. Always becoming and never being, Manning was, in the words of former advisor Thomas Flanagan, "waiting for the wave": the tide of national alienation he would ride to power. "Everywhere that rises must converge," as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said, and it is strange that no one has ever noted the parallels between Manning's thought and that of the heretical French Jesuit: Like Teilhard, Manning believed that greater complexity would lead to higher consciousness and that man (or, at least, Canadian man) was evolving to an omega point. And at the end, presiding over the great reconciliation would be . . . Preston Manning.

Thus, Manning's concerns were more sacred than profane, and Reform was not so much a political party as a cult. My colleague Colby Cosh dubbed Manning's shock troops the "Presuits," and they rooted out heresy assiduously. Purges came as naturally to Reform as they do to the Randians. Anyone who threatened to create a rival power base, doubted Manning's leadership, or stood firm on matters of principle was frozen out or expelled.

The most egregious example of Manning's tyrannical leadership was his temporary expulsion from the caucus in 1996 of two MPs who had spoken out against the legal recognition of homosexual equality—which was Reform's own position. Accused of "homophobia," Manning panicked. He later justified his action in a bizarre article in which he declared that discrimination—anywhere, under any circumstances—would not be tolerated by the Reform Party.

Much as Reformers chafed under Presuitical rule, it was accepted that, so long as the party existed, Manning would lead it. Unfortunately for him, however, Reform had a sunset clause in its constitution: Unless it formed a government by the end of 1999, the party would dissolve. Goodbye Reform Party, hello Canadian Alliance. The Alliance, however, was mocked as a mere makeover: as Mulroney put it, "the Reform Party in pantyhose." Manning understood that, if the Alliance was to have any credibility, he must allow a leadership contest. Manning did not help his own cause by waging a particularly insouciant campaign, acting as if he were running for president of the Elks Club or student council. He advanced no policies and appealed exclusively to residual party loyalty. After the first ballot, in which he trailed Stockwell Day 36 percent to 44 percent (there were three other candidates), he sealed his doom by per-

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mitting (or encouraging) his supporters to defame Day as a dangerous "extremist." (His campaign manager actually compared Day to Jim Jones of Jonestown infamy.) On the second ballot, Day humiliated Manning, winning 64 percent to 36 percent.

Manning was shocked by the result. So were the media, which had come to love Manning as the "conservative" who plays by his enemies' rules and loses graciously. Manning's new elite friends lamented that an ungrateful party had dumped him for cosmetic reasons: It had replaced a 57-year-old evangelical Protestant from Alberta with a 50-year-old evangelical Protestant from Alberta solely because Day is younger, better looking, and does not speak in a grating parsonical whine. They never understood that Manning was fundamentally at odds with the aspirations of most Reform supporters.

Stockwell Day frightens the governing Liberals. He plays to win. In response to charges of "extremism," he declares, "The era of political correctness is over." Jason Kenney, his American-educated campaign manager, told me that, under Day, the Canadian Alliance will imitate Ronald Reagan's strategy in 1980 and 1984: Day will seek to persuade Middle Canadian voters that the Liberals are their enemies, not their friends. Day is well suited to play the role of Reagan. He is cool, confident, and optimistic, although he has indulged occasionally in foolish and sometimes repellent demagoguery. It will be difficult for the Liberals to make him a bogeyman, although they are doing their worst. Day has already been accused of neo-Nazi sympathies and of being responsible for the recent stabbing of a Vancouver abortionist.

Kenney is the former head of the Canadian Taxpayers Association, and tax relief will probably be the major issue in the next election campaign, which is expected to be called this year or next. The Alliance is committed to a single federal income-tax rate of 17 percent. Canada's current rates are 17 percent up to $29,590, 26 percent up to $59,180, and 29 percent above that. In comparison, Americans pay only 15 percent on income up to $63,486 (in Canadian dollars), and the 28 percent rate doesn't kick in until $153,443 (in Canadian dollars). Americans may also deduct mortgage-interest payments; Canadians cannot. In addition, Canadians pay a seven-percent consumer tax on all goods and services.

Steve Forbes peddled the flat-tax idea in two primary campaigns, with little success. Until recently, I would have predicted that the Liberals could attack the Alliance plan to devastating effect. Now, I am not so sure. Prime Minister Chrétien has repeatedly castigated those who want to keep more of their earnings as "greedy," inviting them to leave the country. Tens of thousands of skilled professionals leave every year, and more would if they could. It is part of the New Canada myth that exorbitant taxation is the price we pay for living in "the best country in the world"; yet, as even a shocked *New York Times* has reported, Canada's social-safety net is unraveling. Canadians who do not want to die on our notorious Medicare waiting lists are heading south for treatment in droves. Now that Canadians earning as little as $30,000 pay an effective marginal tax rate of 50 percent, the U.N.'s endorsement does not quite warm the heart the way it used to.

Historians will judge Brian Mulroney as the man who singlehandedly razed a great national institution. Canadians, however, have reason to be grateful, for the unintended consequence of Mulroney's hubris is that we now have, in the Canadian Alliance, a viable alternative to Liberal (and liberal) hegemony.

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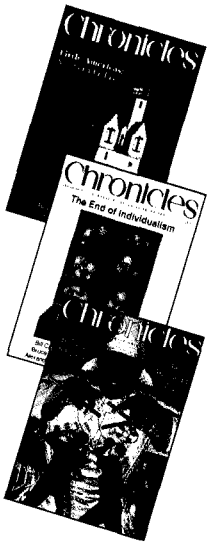

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"All the News Unfit to Print"

Signs of the Times

Vol. 2 No. 11 November 2000

In light of the vital importance of the Middle East to American interests, it is curious that our media have chosen not to report Arab reactions, which have been uniformly negative, to Sen. Joseph Lieberman's vice-presidential candidacy. From America's friends in the Persian Gulf and Egypt to its foes in the Levant and North Africa, commentators have stressed that even the pretense of U.S. impartiality in Middle Eastern affairs would be impossible should Gore win. The Syrian government-owned daily *Al-Thawra* expressed the general sentiment in an op-ed column (August 13):

> Al Gore's choice of Lieberman . . . cannot be reconciled with America's role as an honest, objective and neutral mediator in the peace process . . . U.S. policy . . . is submissive to Israeli policies. There is no pure American policy. There is only Israel's policy as carried out by the United States.

Such views prevail even among America's Middle Eastern allies. Galal Dowidar, editor-in-chief of the pro-government Cairo daily *Al Akhbar*, did not mince his words (August 9):

> Although the control of the Jewish lobby over U.S. affairs has reached its peak, nobody could imagine that matters would reach this level . . . [Gore's] decision reveals his ugly face and completes the series of surrenders that Clinton started when he appointed Jewish Americans to strategic positions. With this decision, he declared that he has sold himself to Israel and the Jewish lobby.

Syria's state-owned *Al-Ba'th* (August 10) even suggested that Gore's life could be in danger because of Lieberman's appointment:

> If Gore dies, Lieberman becomes the first Jewish president in U.S. history. . . . This makes Gore the target of Jewish extremists who will not hesitate to do anything to put a Jew in the White House.

In Kuwait, the independent *Al-Qabas* warned on August 15 that Lieberman would inevitably have dual loyalties and that a Gore administration would forfeit the role of an honest broker in the Middle East. But the Lebanese daily *Al-Mustaqbal* (August 11) stated that Gore's decision to choose Lieberman was not surprising since the current secretary of state, secretary of defense, and the head of the National Security Council are all Jewish. "What is strange is this Arab amazement," the paper concludes. The Beirut daily *As-Safir* agreed (August 10):

> Whatever the result of the American presidential election . . . American positions on Arab issues will not be different. . . . The issue is the United States itself and its policies towards the region and the Arabs. The issue is not Clinton, Gore, or even Lieberman himself.

The same point was made in *Al-Ba'th* (August 9):

> There will be no difference between the Democrat, Al Gore, who chose an extreme Zionist as his running mate, and the Republican, George Bush, who does not hide his bias toward Israel and his blind commitment to its demands.

On this point, informed Israelis agree with their Arab neighbors. The *Jerusalem Post* (August 14) smugly noted that Lieberman's Jewishness is not important since the Middle Eastern policies of the two major parties are indistinguishable:

> Nowadays, Israel does not have to be concerned about damage from good US-Arab or even US-Palestinian relations. Such links can aid the peace process and give Washington leverage toward lowering antagonism toward Israel. Of course, the fact that Israel has so little to worry about is perhaps the most important point in viewing this American election from Jerusalem. Even without the presence of Lieberman on the ticket, this would probably still be true.

Sticking to the Middle East, it seems that sanctions will remain in place against Iraq regardless of who wins the White House. An editorial in the *Jordan Times* (September 1) warned of the Arab "sense of outrage at the suffering being inflicted on the Iraqi people":

> The sanctions on Iraq are imposed notably by the US, the main broker in peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, and the US, for its own unfathomable reasons, wishes to prolong the suffering of the Iraqi people. Woe betide anyone who dares to cross it.

In Europe, however, there is growing opposition to the embargo, and the tenth anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait has renewed the debate on maintaining sanctions. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, a respected French monthly, published an article entitled "The Endless War on Iraq." An editorialist in the *Irish Times* (August 4) stressed that the sanctions only undermine the Iraqi people's desire to topple Saddam from power:

> A broken people is unable to resist the regime . . . If the Iraqi people are to confront the regime they must be given the chance to do so through re-

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> covering their self-confidence by rebuilding their infrastructure and resources.

The *Irish Times* also had harsh words for U.S. policy in another conflict-ridden part of the world. The leading Dublin daily warned that, far from bringing peace, Clinton's "war on drugs" will drag Colombia deeper into bloodshed (August 23):

> Ironically, with Clinton keen to enhance the image of his presidency, Plan Colombia may leave a stain on his legacy and present a poisoned chalice for his successor. It also poses a problem for his European allies who will need to unite if they are not to be dragged into the Colombian quagmire. Far from helping Colombia to "strengthen its democracy," Clinton's policies have done the opposite. The Pentagon has formed an alliance with an army that refuses to disengage from drug trafficking and from the notorious "paramilitaries."

"This is not Vietnam; neither is it Yankee imperialism," Clinton said of his $1.3 billion aid package. "Colombia's democracy is under attack," he told Colombians in a televised address, assuring them that U.S. aid would be used to promote economic and judicial reform and provide training and equipment for the country's military in its war on drug traffickers. But most of the aid will go to the Colombian military and police, both notorious for their "human rights" abuses. "[O]nly $240 million of the $1.3 billion is actually going to economic and judicial reform," the Dutch newspaper *De Volkskrant*—among others—pointed out on September 1. This view was shared by the *Independent* (September 3):

> This most shameless of US presidents will be out of office in four months, leaving someone else to sort out the mess. Opinion polls have suggested that the electorate is worried about drugs, and that the Democrats are seen as soft on the issue. Mr. Clinton is doing Al Gore a favor, at no political cost to himself, while also delighting US arms manufacturers with substantial orders, not least the companies whose helicopters will be part of the aid package. You do not have to be a cynic to guess, correctly, that they also happen to be important donors . . . to the Democratic Party.

El Correo, a Spanish daily, concluded (September 1) that Colombia differs from Vietnam in this respect: The goal is not to liberate a people from the threat of communism, but "to liberate the North American drug market from its natural sources." This is precisely why the war on drugs in Colombia will fail, and why Clinton is involved in "one of the most immoral American interventions of modern times," as Simon Jenkins wrote in the *Times* of London (September 1). Jenkins argues that the drug trade should be legalized so that countries can regulate and tax it. Without such reform,

> gangsters will stay rich, the poor will stay poor, the addicts [will] stay addicted . . . [and] half of Latin America will be politically enslaved to the new American imperialism.

The other half of Latin America may take revenge by enslaving the United States. "North America Doesn't Need Borders," the *Wall Street Journal* proclaimed on August 29, while a week earlier the *Financial Times* opined that

> The best way to deal with [illegal immigration] is to legitimize labor flows and ensure that Mexican workers in the US enjoy the same legal rights and protections as their local counterparts.

The business community welcomed the demand of Mexico's new president, Vicente Fox, that the United States allow millions more Mexicans to immigrate and work here. His desire is natural: Both Fox and his defeated PRI predecessors belong to Mexico's white power elite and, thus, wish to unload many of their desolate and uneducated *mestizos* and Indians on the United States. The short-term result will be the lowering of America's material, cultural, and civilizational standards. But the ultimate price of unlimited immigration is the destruction of the Western world. On September 3, the *Guardian*—a left-liberal paper if there ever was one—published a special report on demographic trends entitled "The last days of a white world." Analyzing demographic trends in the United States, the article provides a glimpse of what is in store for the West:

> The shifting sands of the US reflect wider—and highly controversial—changes elsewhere in the world. It is an area in which few demographers dare to tread for fear of being accused of racism.

According to the *Guardian*, 98 percent of the growth in the world's population by 2025 will take place in the Third World. A century ago, Europe had a quarter of the world's population, and three times that of Africa; by 2050, it will account for just seven percent of the world's population—and have only a third that of Africa:

> The ageing and declining populations of predominantly white nations have prompted calls for more immigration: Edmund Stoiber, the premier of Bavaria in southern Germany, called on Germans to have more babies as an alternative to more immigrants. . . . [A] demographer, who didn't want to be named for fear of being called racist, said: "It's a matter of pure arithmetic that, if nothing else happens, non-Europeans will become a majority and whites a minority in the UK. That would probably be the first time an indigenous population has voluntarily become a minority in its historic homeland."

The paper quotes British National Party chairman Nick Griffin, who sees a major cause for alarm in this trend:

> Every people under the sun have a right to their place under the sun, and the right to survive. If people predicted that Indians would be a minority in India in 2100, everyone would be calling it genocide.

Such views, of course, remain unfit to print in America's "mainstream" press. At this rate, we'll soon wish we could trade places with spotted owls and sperm whales.

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Frankenstein's Children

by George McCartney

"Monstrum horrendum, informe ingens."

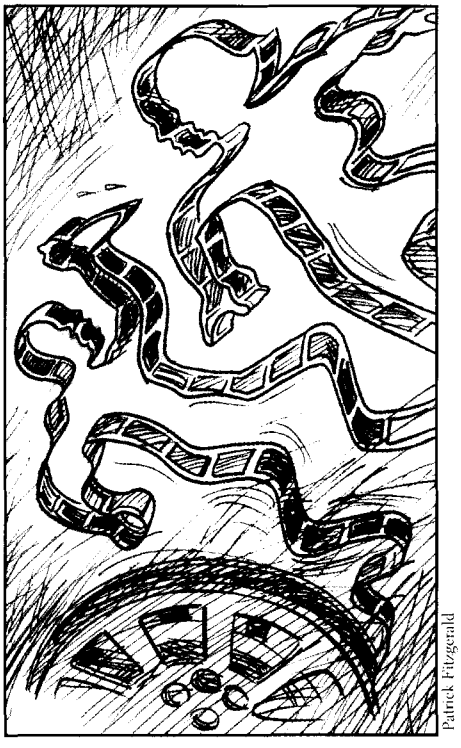
—Vergil, *Aeneid*

Monsters From the Id: The Rise of Horror in Fiction and Film
by E. Michael Jones
Dallas: Spence Publishing Company;
336 pp., $27.95

◆

In 1974, I first encountered one of the creatures E. Michael Jones writes about in *Monsters From the Id*. It appeared in the guise of one of my graduate-school classmates. She was a bright, pretty woman who seemed unusually self-possessed and accomplished for a 22-year-old. My impression changed, however, when I committed the *faux pas* of mentioning that my wife had recently become pregnant with our second child. Without a moment's hesitation, my colleague brightly inquired, "Are you considering abortion?" I was so astonished that I could not help laughing in her perky, well-scrubbed face. I do not believe she ever forgave my convulsive rudeness. Of course, had I been attentive to contemporary trends, her question would not have taken me by surprise. It had been a full year since *Roe* v. *Wade*, and the Robespierres of the feminist legal revolution had become tirelessly vigilant in its bloody cause.

Not coincidentally, this was the high-water mark of the left-liberal sexual agenda. Whenever sex was the topic (and when wasn't it?), the discussion was purely technical: positions, techniques, lubricants, and—of course—contraceptive measures, all talked about in the same tones you might use to analyze your golf game. Dalliance without consequences was the order of the day; it was called—how quaint it seems now—"recreational sex," a pleasurable but routine matter to be managed sensibly to everyone's mutual satisfaction. Romance? Sure, if you



Patrick Fitzgerald

needed it, but, really, it would not do to get too intense. Sexual relations should be as enjoyable and as significant as having dinner with a friend. Pregnancy was easily avoidable; should there be any mistakes, abortion on demand provided an ironclad backstop. Intercourse, after all, had loftier purposes than procreation. As another woman in my graduate program assured me, there would have been no Vietnam War if people had been "doing it more." When I pointed out that the president who had dragged us into that mess was known to have made (in Iago's phrase) "the beast with two backs" about as frequently and indiscriminately as humanly—or should I say, inhumanly?—possible, she muttered darkly that J. Edgar Hoover and the CIA had forced poor Saint Jack to depart from his live-and-let-live *bon vivant* ways.

You could not really blame those poor dears for holding such preposterous notions. They had fallen under the sway of the 1970's university culture in which the tenets of such seers as William Blake had become gospel. "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle, than nurse unacted desires," Blake had counseled, and intellectuals of the 70's were only too willing to take him at his word. Now, a quarter of a century later, our enlightened nation has murdered well over 40 million infants, most of them sacrificed in the cause of adult desire. Strangely, people do not seem any happier than they did before the revolution; in fact, they seem considerably more confused. With the grisly specter of partial-birth abortion and the scandal of fathers abandoning their families by the millions to pursue erotic self-realization, many adults are having second thoughts about the virtues of sexual liberation. Young people, on the other hand, seem to be acting out their distress by torturing themselves with heavy metal and rap music, not to mention mutilating their bodies with tattoos and decorative piercings.

Jones traces the causes of today's sexual chaos to the Enlightenment of two-and-a-half centuries ago. The secular movements—Jacobinism, Illuminism, and scientific materialism—that emerged during the French Revolution presumed to take rational control of sexual desire but unwittingly set free the disruptive monsters from the id. Jones takes his title from the 1959 science-fiction film *Forbidden Planet*, which to his mind allegorically expresses what has happened to us in the modern era. In the movie, astronauts travel to another star and discover the artifacts of the Krell, a long-dead race of highly evolved beings who once commanded a supremely sophisticated technology—no levers, no buttons, no maintenance. They merely had to wish for something, and their machines would make it happen. This felicitous state, however, turned out to be their undoing. In their pride, they had overlooked the subconscious. Having achieved such extraordinary power, they eventually fell victim to their own de-

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vices. "The Krell forgot one thing, monsters from the Id," one of the film's characters explains. It was not only their enlightened intellects that wielded power but their unacknowledged self-will: They could not prevent themselves from unleashing the destructive forces of their aggression and lust.

Jones finds in this piece of popular entertainment an allegory of the Enlightenment and its aftermath. He argues that, since the revolutionary movement of the 18th century, the West has entered into a Faustian bargain that has exacted an increasingly terrible cost. In our rational, secular hubris, we assumed we could dispense with traditional morality and freely indulge our erotic fancies without untoward consequences, especially since the advent of penicillin and scientifically improved contraception. Instead of achieving the peaceable kingdom of sexual liberation, however, we have erected a culture closer to the Marquis de Sade's torture chamber. We have licensed brutality in the cause of pleasure and self-fulfillment: Instead of creating genuine liberty, we have managed to foster a society in which some—usually men—trample on the rights of others, usually women and children. Pornography, venereal disease, sexual cruelty, abortion, and abandonment are its hallmarks.

Jones begins with the Enlightenment's impact on Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter Mary. Inspired with revolutionary fervor, both women wanted to believe that the night of superstition had passed and that people would be able to live rationally without outdated institutions, such as marriage. They discovered instead that, once women agree to forgo the restraints imposed by traditional morality, they all too easily become victims of male wantonness. Wollstonecraft found herself and her first child abandoned in revolutionary France by her lover, Gilbert Imlay, and sought relief by attempting suicide. Twenty-two years later, her second daughter, Mary, fathered by radical thinker William Godwin, ran away with Percy Bysshe Shelley only to find herself pressed by the mercilessly idealistic poet into an incestuous *ménage* with her half-sister Claire. When Shelley's abandoned wife Harriet committed suicide, the 18-year-old pregnant Mary suffered from nightmares, one of which became the seed of her novel *Frankenstein*. The monster is both the sign of her guilt for having absconded with Shelley and the embodiment of her fears about bringing new life into a world of such domestic disorder. As Jones sees it, the forlorn monster symbolizes her remorse.

By complying with the revolutionary call for sexual liberation, Jones argues, these women and untold numbers since have found themselves enslaved in a Sadean universe. Arguing from Enlightenment principles, Sade had demonstrated that, in a godless world, the human body can be considered nothing more than a machine. Like any other machine, its purpose is to serve its master. He openly championed an ethos in which the body—the female body, in particular—becomes an appliance at the disposal of those in power, namely, upper-class men such as himself and Shelley. While Sade remained largely an underground figure in 18th- and 19th-century Europe, he had come into his own by the 1960's, when pornography was becoming all but respectable in the West. The watershed, as Jones sees it, was 1973, when two pornographic films, *Deep Throat* and *The Devil and Miss Jones*, ranked among the top ten grossing movies of the year. Although pornography has always been with us, it had previously lurked in the darker corners of our culture, acknowledged (if at all) with signs of disgust or embarrassment. By the 1970's, however, vice no longer paid lip service to virtue. When porn broke into the mainstream, our more advanced critics, pundits, and politicians found themselves unable to stand up to it, or even to evaluate it. As part of the liberal Enlightenment themselves, they, like my grad-school friends, were committed to the belief that sexual activity was value-free. One might comment on it as a species of sport, evaluating timing, technique, and style, but anything sounding like a moral critique was considered unfashionable. In the *New York Times*, Vincent Canby blandly reported that a lot of organic plumbing was surfacing at local movie houses and then professed to be utterly bored by its repetitive display. His response became the official line: Pornography's sin was not that it corrupted its audience, scandalized children, defiled and often brutalized its participants, or lined the pockets of its mob-connected entrepreneurs; its gravest offense was that it was boring. This was a cunning dodge. After all, the last thing one wanted to appear was shocked or outraged: It was just sex, after all. Or was it? Jones brings forth Linda Boreman, a.k.a Linda Lovelace, to show it was not so. Years after her moment of dubious fame as the star of *Deep Throat*, Boreman revealed that she had been routinely beaten into submission and forced to perform sexual acts. Few in the mainstream media wanted to listen: Her revelations did not mesh with their enlightened sexual principles.

Jones adduces further evidence of our cultural sickness in what he takes to be the revival of horror films during the late 1970's. After Hollywood managed to break the Production Code in the 1960's and began to grace its movies with naked young women, he argues, a reaction set in. Suddenly, theaters were filled with horror films as never before. Its commercial antennae ever aquiver, Hollywood was instinctively responding to its audience's uneasiness about graphic sexuality by giving it *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Alien*, films that seemed to serve retribution on such immorality. There is some merit to this analysis, but not as much as Jones thinks. For one thing, I cannot detect that much variation in the flow of horror films from Hollywood: They seem rather constant. For another, Jones' interpretations of those made since the 70's are tendentious. He wants us to believe, among other things, that Ridley Scott's *Alien* is about the horror of abortion, its biomechanical monster standing for the fetus that Ripley, the astronaut heroine, tries desperately to purge from her space capsule at the end of the narrative. For Jones, the monster is, like Shelley's in *Frankenstein*, the return of repressed guilt, not as denied impulse but as denied conscience. It embodies Ripley's unacknowledged guilt as one who embraces feminism and its commitment to absolute control of the body's procreative functions. While the movie's closing episode is an ugly and horrific business, did the filmmakers intend it to carry the moral weight Jones detects? Or were they simply doing what has come naturally in every film since *King Kong*: put a nearly naked gal in the same frame with a gargantuan display of testosterone? (*Alien*'s monster looks a good deal more phallic than fetal.) Come to think of it, didn't Edmund Spenser, in 1596, do something similar at the end of Book I of the *Faerie Queene* by having Una tied to a tree as St. George beats back the dragon holding her captive? Jones tries to sidestep such questions of intentionality by arguing that creators are often unaware of the meaning of their works. I am willing to accept this up

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to a point, but Jones overreaches; unfettered by considerations of authorial purpose, his interpretations become overly ingenious. Most glaringly, he willfully misreads Don Siegel's classic, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, contending that the story's aliens proliferate in response to the hero and heroine's divorced condition, thereby allegorically scolding them for their sexual waywardness. But it is clear from both Jack Finney's novel and the film that divorce is meant to mark these characters as strong-minded individuals who refuse to bow to oppressive social norms. Indeed, their willfulness gives them the strength to stand up to the forces of collectivist conformity that the aliens represent. I have no quarrel with Jones' disapproval of divorce, but his morals do not license him to change an author's meaning.

On the whole, I am sympathetic to the main lines of Jones' argument. On substantive issues, he is broadly right. But to combat the modern dehumanization of sex, Jones seems to be prescribing a wholly unpalatable, not to say impossible, cure. He seems to suggest that sexual activity of any kind conducted outside the marriage bed leads to dire consequences. Does this mean we are to have no more flirting? How are people ever to get to the marriage bed if there are to be no preliminary intimacies? Jones seems a little like Gulliver among the Houyhnhnms: He wants us to live in a dream of absolute virtue, our morality plotted out in advance with no surprises lurking along the wooded path. Affairs of the heart, from hand-holding to whispered endearments, are to be carefully legislated lest passion get the upper hand. Hauling in Andrea Dworkin to help support his case, he unintentionally gives his puritanical game away. Jones cites Dworkin's arguments about the brutal climate created by pornography but fails to mention that she also wants sexual intercourse abolished because she believes it is inherently abusive and degrading to women. This is strong medicine; I suppose most of us will be forgiven if, like St. Augustine, we defer the dose as long as possible. The truth is that, when it comes to sexuality, there are no tidy solutions. In suggesting otherwise, Jones mirrors the sexual liberationists he decries. Like them, he offers a simplistic response to an inherently complex challenge.

These reservations aside, Jones' book is well worth attention. His argument may be overstated and mildly puritanical, but it is lively and often provocative. He is especially suggestive in his discussion of the Illuminists of the late 18th century, who sought to gain control of society by manipulating its leaders. The Illuminist method was to discover the illicit passions of key figures and pander to them. Jones argues that the Illuminist strategy manifests itself in the policies of our corporations, government, and other institutions today. (The Ford Foundation once funded the bizarrely lascivious notions of Alfred Kinsey in the supposed cause of sexual enlightenment.) Whether they intend it or not, all of these organizations have a vested interest in keeping us erotically distracted. As the Marquis de Sade argued, a shrewd government will see to its citizens' sexual excitation and gratification, reducing their desire for political action and contributing to their consumerist impulses as well as their physical ones. Lust, after all, requires endless blandishments. So it is that our great nation rivets itself to our Commander in Chief's every trouser twitch, while yawning at his distant bombings. Hour by hour, our brave new world slides smoothly toward quiet tyranny.

Winter into Spring

by David Middleton

We drive north to New Orleans this far south
Where sea and land both lose themselves in marsh
And spring breaks through mild winter's brittle cold
When pansies blaze over the noonlight's ice.
We know, of course, the rare unsparing day
When sovereign Arctic blasts sweep south-southeast
Freezing the boughs of budding fig and pear
As in the fall and summer kindred winds
Bring down from mobile thrones of blade and air
Our ladybug and monarch butterfly.

But these are open winters where the sun
Tempers the sleet to rain and makes a dew
Of snowflakes on the maiden maple leaf.
And even in a January dawn,
Awakened by the salt breath of the Gulf,
Dutch clover, yellow mustard, and a thin
Unbending periwinkle on a stalk
Deep-rooted in its terra-cotta pot
Spread hues and scents across pale frosted lawns
Till once more spring's green regency has come.

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Slender Threads of Liberty

by Steven H. Aden

The Tyranny of Good Intentions: How Prosecutors and Bureaucrats Are Trampling the Constitution in the Name of Justice
by Paul Craig Roberts and Lawrence M. Stratton
Roseville, California: Prima Publishing; 183 pp., $24.95

◆

Although Paul Craig Roberts, a nationally syndicated columnist and Hoover Institution fellow, and Lawrence M. Stratton, a fellow of the Institute for Political Economy, are trained in economic and legal analysis, they have written a book that seeks to appeal to civic virtue at the popular level. They do so mainly by weaving together dozens of anecdotes and case studies into a narrative of governmental abuse of power that packs an emotional, as well as intellectual, punch.

The authors' thesis is that America is slipping into tyranny because Americans have forgotten the importance of holding government accountable to law, and because they have become "emotionally and intellectually disconnected from the long struggle to establish the people's sovereignty over the law." The first third of the book traces the rise and fall of the rule of law in English and American jurisprudence, beginning with the "Rights of Englishmen": a common-law concept of natural rights that predates our own Bill of Rights. These rights, including the right to property, the prohibition on retroactive liability, and the right against self-incrimination, were established centuries ago in Alfred the Great's codification of the common law (circa A.D. 800) and the Magna Carta of 1215; in 21st century America, they are being undermined by a growing public demand for law and order. Roberts' and Stratton's examples of this worrisome trend are well researched and moving. For instance, they first take issue with the rise in "strict liability" crimes—crimes that do not require proof of malicious intent or evil motive. They cite, among other cases, the prosecution of Exxon for the Prince William Sound oil spill in 1989 and that of Charles Keating for misrepresentations made by salesmen during the savings-and-loan scandal. Exxon was charged with questionable violations of laws that were not intended to apply to unintentional conduct, including discharging hazardous substances and killing migratory birds without a permit. Although President Bush's attorney general, Richard Thornburgh, acknowledged that the felony charges made "a unique case which requires some innovative legal approaches," Exxon pled guilty and paid a $125 million fine to avoid a risky trial and the possibility of far greater damages. Likewise, Keating was indicted and tried under the "novel legal theory" that he was criminally liable for fraudulent representations made by his bond salesmen, despite his having been unaware of them. After-four-and-a-half years in prison, Keating was freed by a federal judge who held that his conviction violated the constitutional prohibition against *ex post facto* laws.

Roberts and Stratton argue that justice is the goal of the legal system. Wisely, they do not hazard a definition of "justice"; like Pilate's "truth," notions of justice are largely in the eye of the beholder. Two thousand years of Western jurisprudence have not improved on the Roman jurist Justinian's adage that "Justice is the firm and continuous desire to render to every man that which is his due." The dialogue breaks down over what is *due* to us.

Chief Judge Richard Posner of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, a leading economic legal theorist of the Chicago School, observes that the most common meaning of the word "justice" is efficiency. "When people describe as unjust convicting a person without a trial, taking property without just compensation, or failing to make a negligent automobile driver answer in damages to the victim of his negligence, this means nothing more pretentious than that the conduct wastes resources." But efficiency does not explain many of society's oldest prohibitions. Posner notes that it is not obviously inefficient to allow suicide pacts, to force people to give self-incriminating testimony, or to flog prisoners, but these acts offend the sense of justice of many Americans and are consequently illegal. "[T]here is more to justice than economics," he concludes. "There may well be definite although wide boundaries on both the explanative and reformative power of economic analysis of law." The impact of Roberts' and Stratton's argument lies in the fact that the authors, although skilled economists, have nonetheless refrained from viewing every corruption of power as an economic problem with an efficient solution. Instead, they use economic theory as a tool to prove that the optimal legal system is one that maximizes the efficient search for truth.

The authors admirably stand up to the prevailing winds of postmodern relativism (or, more accurately, spit into them) by emphatically declaring, "The function of justice is to serve truth. . . . Consequently, the foremost task of a justice system is to establish the truth or falsity of the charges levied against the accused." Roberts and Stratton take the quest for truth, expressed as factual accuracy, as their moral compass while they navigate the darkening thickets of the law. They contend that plea bargaining corrupts because it severs prosecution from its proper emphasis on the factual accuracy of the charges a suspect pleads to, thereby reducing public confidence in the justice of the sentences imposed. Forcing attorneys to divulge their clients' secrets under threat of prosecution, as in the case of Charles Keating's law firm, whose 400 lawyers each had his personal assets frozen by federal prosecutors as "abettors" to Keating's alleged fraud, corrupts because, without the security afforded the accused by attorney-client privilege, defendants are loath to tell their whole story to their counsel; the outcome is "convictions resulting from a lack of access to legal knowledge, not from wrongdoing."

Roberts and Stratton are clearly out to prove their case; they do it well, making, along the way, some gutsy and highly entertaining claims. "Junk bond" financier Michael Milken was jailed on nonexistent criminal charges. Hoteliere Leona Helmsley was a "victim of Rudolph Giuliani's ambitions," convicted on the basis of suborned perjury. J. Edgar Hoover was

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a misunderstood defender of civil rights who set "high standards" for FBI ethics. If their work has a flaw, it is the authors' proclivity to pamphleteer rather than present a balanced, cogent case. Stratton and Roberts overstate their argument, and thereby weaken it, by parading their list of horribles as if there were no countervailing forces acting to restrain Leviathan, while eschewing discussion of those checks (principally in the form of fee-shifting provisions in actions brought by or against the United States) that do exist. For instance, one of the authors' favorite statutory whipping boys—the Clean Water Act—includes a provision allowing judges to award reasonable litigation costs, including attorney and expert fees, "to any party, wherever the court determines such award is appropriate." Also absent is any reference to the Equal Access to Justice Act passed to curb the litigious urges of the federal government. The act allows plaintiffs who prevail to be awarded fees and costs in civil actions brought by agencies and officials of the federal government if the citizen can prove the government's position was not "substantially justified." Congress passed the act to ameliorate the harsh common-law rule (derived from the ancient English jurisprudence of which the authors seem so fond) that the sovereign's fisc is not liable to judicial levy.

And while Roberts and Stratton liberally quote Henry Hyde's imprecations against civil-forfeiture abuses, that legislator's crowning achievement on behalf of governmental accountability—the Hyde Amendment—extended the terms of the Equal Access to Justice Act to criminal enforcement actions brought by the federal government that are found to be "vexatious, frivolous, or in bad faith." Recently, a federal court in Massachusetts levied Hyde Amendment sanctions against the Environmental Protection Agency for bringing false charges under the Clean Water Act against Riverdale Mills Corporation and its controlling shareholder and operations manager, James Knott. EPA agents had conducted an unannounced inspection at Riverdale Mills' Northbridge, Massachusetts, plant, in 1997 to check pH levels in the plant's wastewater discharge. Knott allowed them on the premises on the condition that he accompany them to test wastewater at the plant's two testing manholes. The agents nonetheless took levels at one manhole surreptitiously, then returned twice with search warrants for further testing based upon the illegally obtained test results. Although pH levels at the first manhole, which was located on Riverdale Mills property, were substantially lower than the EPA's minimum standard, the levels at the second manhole, on public property, were acceptable. The EPA chose to prosecute anyway, ignoring the fact that Riverdale was in compliance with EPA standards by the time its wastewater flowed onto public property. Worse, Riverdale had evidence that someone—presumably an EPA agent—had changed readings at the second manhole from acceptable to illegal levels. "In the absence of evidence of an illegal wastewater discharge into the public sewer at Manhole #2, the government persisted in the presentation of evidence to the Grand Jury," federal judge Nathaniel M. Gorton wrote.

> The defendants' humiliation at being criminally prosecuted was intensified when the United States Attorney and the EPA issued a Press Release following the indictment which stated that [Riverdale Mills] and Knott were knowingly polluting the rivers of the Commonwealth.

Although the EPA dropped the charges after it became apparent that they could not substantiate their case, Judge Gorton held that the agency's conduct was "clearly vexatious" and ordered the government to pay Riverdale nearly $70,000 in attorneys' fees and costs. Thankfully, decisions like *United States* v. *Knott* are becoming more frequent; with the rising tide of federalism and respect for states' rights evident in many recent Supreme Court decisions, there may yet be hope where some of the issues raised by the authors are concerned.

Roberts and Stratton conclude with a well-intentioned but sketchy few pages entitled "Prospects for Reform." Their summation, while deceptively simple, is devastatingly accurate: "The plight of American democracy is beyond the reach of legal reform alone. . . . Without an intellectual rebirth, a revival of constitutionalism, there is no hope for American democracy." That justice is the end of the law, and that the law emanates from the will of the people, are categorical imperatives that cannot be proved or disproved by means of popular election, legislative debate, or trial by jury. Yet it is on these slender threads that the Framers of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights hung the integrity of the republic. A signer of the Declaration of Independence, John Witherspoon, put it most saliently: "A republic, once equally poised, must either preserve its virtue or lose its liberty."

Roberts and Stratton are to be commended for this fine short work and should be exhorted to expound on its themes in future, more substantive volumes. But God help us if it takes two economists to remind us that "the law is reposed in the bosoms of the people and not in the will of the state."

Steven H. Aden is chief litigation counsel to the Rutherford Institute, a civil-liberties organization headquartered in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Poetry in Ploughing

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Set the Ploughshare Deep: A Prairie Memoir
by Timothy Murphy
Athens, Ohio: University of Ohio Press; 108 pp., $29.95

◆

Totally innocent of the myth of progress and the scandal of death and failure that account for modern sentimentality in its most wrongheaded and obnoxious form, *Set the Ploughshare Deep* is as realistic a work as a novel by Thomas Hardy or the Old Testament.

> Tractor and combine axle-deep in muck,
> seedcorn and soybeans frozen in the field,
> the home farm pledged against a bumper yield,
> he has run out of money, time and luck.
>
> What would his frugal Swedish forebears think
> to see their hard-won holdings on the block?
> There is no solace for a laughing-stock
> in woman's arms, religion or strong drink.
>
> Any day now the banker will fore-

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close,
summon the sheriff and the auctioneers.
What will he tell his sons in twenty years?
He cannot wholly blame the early snows.

("The Failure")

In fact, the one sentimental line in the entire book, quoted by the author's father at a funeral, is attributable not to Tim Murphy but to that old prairie sentimentalist and windbag, Carl Sandburg. "To live hard, work hard, and die hard and then go to hell after all that would be too damn hard." Now *that* is sentimentality, and of the 150-proof variety to boot.

The structure of this book, really the product of four intelligences (Murphy, a poet, venture-capitalist, and farmer; Charles Beck, a woodcut artist; Vincent Murphy, Tim's father, who contributes his recollections of the Great Depression; and Alan Sullivan, Murphy's collaborator, whom the author credits with having gathered and arranged fragments of narrative and, where necessary, ghosted linkages between them), is episodic rather than fragmentary: a single poetic fabric in which prose and verse, word and image, author and subject are closely interwoven. Born in Minnesota in 1951 at the height of the blizzard of January 10 (the worst in 63 years), Murphy went off to Yale where he studied under Robert Penn Warren, who advised him to return to North Dakota and sink his toes deep into home soil. ("He was tutor to a lad / he never really knew— / only the shock of red / like sunrise on a slough.") At home, the young man went into his father's insurance business, while beginning to acquire farm properties of his own. Combining business with farming with poetry, not to mention hunting, proved as conducive to artistic development as it did to material success and even survival, accounting for the humorous stoicism, or stoic humor, that marks the poetry even more strongly than it does the prose.

Bristling with fallen trees
and choked with broken ice
the river threatens the house.
I'll wind up planting rice
If the spring rains don't cease.
What ancestral curse
prompts me to farm and worse,
convert my woes to verse?

("Twice Cursed")

Murphy's descriptions of the flood of 1975 when the Red River overflowed its banks, and of the drought that ensued the following year, are as harrowing as any accounts of natural disasters in the work of Laura Ingalls Wilder; more mundane tribulations and challenges echo a recently published memoir by another North Dakotan author, Larry Woiwode, likewise returned (albeit much later in life) from the East Coast to grapple with his unforgiving native heath. Whether working in prose or in verse, Murphy displays a marked ability to combine grief with resignation, pathos with serenity:

We grieve for the twelve trees we lost last night,
pillars of our community, old friends
and confidants dismembered in our sight,
stripped of their crowns by the unruly winds.
There were no baskets to receive their heads,
no women knitting by the guillotines,
only two sleepers roused from their beds
by fusillades of hailstones on the screens.
Her nest shattered, her battered hatchlings drowned,
a stunned and silent junko watches me
chainsawing limbs from corpses of the downed,
clearing the understory of debris
while supple saplings that survived the blast
lay claim to light and liberty at last.

("The Track of a Storm")

This is rural wisdom, the husbandman's philosophy at its most articulate, trenchant, and profound. Also proud, uncorrupted. Although Murphy is a skilled portraitist (of hunting dogs, as well as of men and women), nothing in this line quite matches his father's unassuming gem of self-revelation in a small story he tells on himself.

One day I was walking behind four horses and a drag while the dust blew. I could hardly see and every muscle in my body ached. When I paused near the highway I saw a man go by smoking a cigar in a big black car. I had been reading Dos Passos and this prompted me to call the driver a bad name. I was leaning toward socialism and thinking there must be a better way. Years later I bought the longest, blackest Oldsmobile to show there was no bitterness in my heart. I never did take up cigar smoking.

No, Tim Murphy doesn't accept government support in maintaining, improving, and expanding his farms. His wonderful little book wasn't published on an NEA grant, either.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is the senior editor for books at Chronicles.

Beyond Consilience

by Scott P. Richert

Life Is a Miracle: An Essay Against Modern Superstition
by Wendell Berry
Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint; 153 pp., $21.00

◆

When I was a senior in high school, a local Christian Reformed pastor recruited me and a few friends to play Christmas carols as his congregation filed into church during Advent. Since our brass quartet also played the recessional, we would sit through the service. One Sunday, the pastor—locally renowned as a thought-provoking speaker—began his sermon by declaring that theologians had never really been able to discover much about God; over the next century, however, all of that would change. Physics had become so advanced that we were very close to defining God in mathematical terms. Physicists would succeed where theologians had failed.

To my 17-year-old mind, this was exciting news. Since I intended to go on to college the next fall to study physics, I was flattered. I had never thought of science in such grandiose terms. Imagine the possibilities: I could win acclaim not only for formulating the Grand Unified Theory, but for discovering God as well! I eagerly shelled out a dollar for a printed version of the pastor's words.

I hadn't thought about that sermon for well over a decade, until the release last year of E.O. Wilson's *Consilience*, an at-

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tempt to lay the scientific groundwork for a Grand Unified Theory of human life. Professor Wilson's enthusiasm recalled my own, but it also reminded me that, after one year and a change of majors, I had re-read the sermon. Now, it struck me as hubristic. The idea that God could be contained in a mathematical formula (or a series of them) seemed a kind of panentheism at best; it certainly was, in Christian terms, impious. Still, the motive behind it could have been good; on one level, at least, the pastor was trying to show that scientific and theological truth were not mutually exclusive. But in defining theological truth in scientific terms, he had—perhaps unintentionally—bound the greatest mystery up in the constraints of man's fallible reason.

This reductionist tendency is the "modern superstition" that Wendell Berry argues against in *Life Is a Miracle*, taking E.O. Wilson as his sparring partner. The poet-farmer from Kentucky and the Alabama-born, Harvard-trained sociobiologist share a passion for conservation; both have been awarded Ingersoll Prizes (Berry, the T.S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing in 1994; Wilson, the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters in 1989); and Mr. Berry expresses admiration for Professor Wilson's scientific knowledge and his earlier works. But his concern is with *Consilience*, in which he believes

> Mr. Wilson speaks for a popular scientific orthodoxy. His book reads as though it was written to confirm the popular belief that science is entirely good, that it leads to unlimited progress, and that it has (or will have) all the answers.

Mr. Berry takes his title from Edgar's admonition to his father, the Earl of Gloucester, in *King Lear*: "Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again." This line, Berry writes, "calls Gloucester back—out of hubris, and the damage and despair that invariably follow—into the properly subordinated human life of grief and joy, where change and redemption are possible."

Mr. Berry sees as Professor Wilson's hubris the belief that "every mystery is a problem, and every problem can be solved. A mystery can exist only because of human ignorance, and human ignorance is always remediable. The appropriate response is not deference or respect, let alone reverence, but pursuit of 'the answer.'" And the damage that his hubris inflicts? It is, potentially, a tyrannical imperialism of science, because

> The direction of Mr. Wilson's consilience . . . is toward an empirical dogma of dead certainty, "a common groundwork of explanation," the terms of which would exclude whatever cannot be empirically explained. Mere "humanitarianism" would do the rest: If you know with certainty what is true, should you not *enforce* the truth? If you see your poor subjects struggling and suffering in their error, how can you rightly forbear to impose the necessary corrections?

The very assumption of the perfectibility of human knowledge is damaging because it makes the "real question that is always to be addressed" appear irrelevant. That question "arises from our state of ignorance: How does one act well—sensitively, compassionately, without irreparable damage—on the basis of *partial* knowledge?" The assumption also potentially shuts us off from the real explanation of human creativity—and, therefore, from the possibility of *humane* creativity:

> [W]hen Mr. Wilson asserts that *Paradise Lost* owes nothing to "God's guidance of Milton's thoughts, as the poet himself believed". . . , he is talking far beyond the reach of proof. He does not consider that *Paradise Lost* is the poem it is because Milton was a man faithful and humble enough to invoke the assistance of the "Heav'nly Muse." The only empirical truth available here is that Milton, believing, wrote *Paradise Lost*, and that Mr. Wilson, disbelieving, wrote *Consilience*, a book of a different order.

Life Is a Miracle hearkens back to Hilaire Belloc's famous pamphlet-length response to H.G. Wells' *Outline of History*, which prompted Wells to respond in kind. While such exchanges were common in the 19th and early 20th centuries, authors today rarely take one another's works so seriously. We can only hope that Professor Wilson returns the favor and writes a response to Mr. Berry. Two great minds, who represent radically different understandings of the nature of human life, engaging each other in a public debate might actually expand our understanding of the limits of human knowledge.

My one criticism of Mr. Berry's book-length essay is that, despite the example he makes of the Earl of Gloucester, he seems to believe that Professor Wilson's thought has moved beyond redemption:

> Edward O. Wilson looks forward to "a Magellanic voyage that eventually encircles the whole of reality" . . . This presumably will be the long end run that will carry us and "the environment" over the goal line of survival.
>
> But in an earlier book, *Biophilia*, Mr. Wilson set forth a far different conclusion, *one which he has now evidently repudiated* [italics mine], but which I wish to affirm: "That the naturalist's journey has only begun and for all intents and purposes will go on forever. That it is possible to spend a lifetime in a magellanic voyage around the trunk of a single tree" . . .

I sympathize with Mr. Berry's attempt to combat the reductionism embodied in Professor Wilson's *Consilience*. But he indulges the same tendency himself by reducing Professor Wilson's work to his latest (and, perhaps, ill-considered) book. Better, as a Christian, to hold out the hope that the man who could write that sentence in *Biophilia* will one day recognize the error of his recent work and return to the fold. Better, too, to give him credit for at least recognizing—unlike so many other intellectuals—that science, religion, and art do not necessarily have to be at odds. (This is not to say that Professor Wilson is a believer: "On religion I lean toward deism but consider its proof largely a problem in astrophysics," he writes in *Consilience*.)

Still, hope does not always triumph: Several years after I heard him deliver his sermon on God and physics, the Christian Reformed pastor was tried, convicted, and defrocked by his denomination for teaching that Christ was not the only way to salvation. After all, if a physicist can define God, and faith can be reduced to the knowledge of mathematical formulas, what need is there for Christ?

Scott P. Richert is the executive editor of Chronicles.

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Principalities & Powers

by Samuel Francis

Are We Decadent?

If there is one premise that serves to unite the Old Right, it is that the West—or America, or Christendom, or whatever label and identity they want to specify—is in trouble, has been in trouble for a long time, and is probably not going to get out of trouble for quite a while, if ever. In a famous but overdone synopsis of the course of modernity, Richard Weaver saw the decline beginning with the 13th-century nominalism of William of Ockham and proceeding logically to the nihilistic existentialism of the current era. Friedrich Hayek believed the age was lurching merrily down the "road to serfdom"; Whittaker Chambers was convinced that the side he had joined when he deserted communism was the losing one; and James Burnham warned that the liberalism that dominates Western culture and politics would facilitate the "suicide of the West." From Oswald Spengler to Robert Bork, virtually everyone on "the right" has prophesied a steady descent into Avernus and a relentless disintegration of Western morals, religion, social institutions, cultural traditions, political freedom, economic affluence, and civil order. Only in the last few decades, with the electoral victory of Ronald Reagan and the collapse of the Soviet Union, have people calling themselves "conservatives" begun to chirp and coo about the "victory" of the right and the triumph of the "Conservative Revolution." But most of those are simply the hired hacks and professional cheerleaders of partisans. The intellectually serious right—conservative, counter-revolutionary, or reactionary—entertains no illusion that any such triumph is on the horizon, or even over it.

Yet the visions of decadence and decline may be exaggerated. Those versed in world history know that epochs that appear to one historian as periods of collapse are viewed by others as periods of rebirth and regeneration. What the secularist Edward Gibbon saw as the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the pagan classical civilization it ruled, the Catholic Christopher Dawson saw as the rise of Christian Europe. Virtually the same stretch of time in which Jacob Burckhardt perceived the civilization of the Renaissance, Johan Huizinga understood as the waning of the Middle Ages. The principle is nothing more complex than what every schoolchild knows: Whatever goes up must come down, and whenever one thing is coming down, another is probably going up, if only we have the eyes to see it rising.

In the case of civilizations, the things that are rising and declining are elites or ruling classes. As James Burnham put it years ago in *The Machiavellians*:

> A nation's strength or weakness, its culture, its powers of endurance, its prosperity, its decadence, depend in the first instance upon the nature of its ruling class. More particularly, the way in which to study a nation, to understand it, to predict what will happen to it, requires first of all and primarily an analysis of the ruling class. Political history and political science are thus predominantly the history and science of ruling classes, their origin, development, composition, structure, and changes.

The transition from pagan Roman imperialism to Christian Greco-Roman imperialism occurred not because most people in the Roman Empire suddenly got right with Jesus but because a new, Christian ruling class displaced the old, pagan ruling class. I do not question the honesty or devotion of the converts, but Christianity offered advantages for rationalizing the political regime and mobilizing the loyalty of its subjects that an exhausted paganism no longer possessed. At the risk of sounding cynical, I suspect it was the political and other secular advantages of Christianity as an imperial public orthodoxy, rather than its purely spiritual appeal, that enabled it to become the animating faith of a new civilization.

The same seems to be true of the end of the Middle Ages, whether we see the era as one of "waning" or of "renaissance." The emergence of new ruling classes based on commercial wealth, humanistic learning, scientific and technological advances, and the growth of cities demanded a new civilization—one marked by what we now call individualism, secularism, rationalism, and continuous innovation—in opposition to the medieval civilization created by the older feudal elites whose power was based on land and its products. Fix your eyes only on the medieval dimension, and all you will see is its gradual decline. If, on the other hand, you fix your eye on emerging social and political forces, you will probably see something else.

So it is today. Most of the exponents of the Old Right I have cited wrote from the perspective of the civilization of which they were members and of the ruling class whose dominance they approved, and, as a result, what they saw was indeed the long, slow, and painful historical process of "waning," what Spengler so poetically called the "Undergoing of the Evening Lands." The ruling class being displaced was the descendant of the class that rose to power at the close of the Middle Ages, the bourgeois elite, and the remnants of the feudal aristocracies with which it had allied. From the perspective of the interests, values, and ideologies of that elite, the erosion of the family, the sexual revolution, the decline of traditional religious beliefs, the emergence of mass democracy, and what Robert Nisbet called the "racial revolution" of the 20th century are all self-evident signs of decline, not only of their civilization but probably all civilization.

But this is simply not so. New elites displaced the old bourgeois class, and the "civilization" they "created" (I am sufficiently bourgeois as to be unable to speak of them without quotation marks) is the managerial system that has been slouching toward, if not Bethlehem, then at least New York and Washington to be born. From the standpoint of the older elites and those traditional conservatives who express their values, it is no civilization at all, merely a jungle of moral, aesthetic, and social anarchy, frequently punctuated by periods of actual political anarchy and occasionally relieved by other periods of political repression. The late Allan Bloom's complaints about the prevalence of "relativism" among his students illustrate a typical conservative (although neoconservative) criticism of our age. "Almost every student entering the university believes, or says he believes,

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that truth is relative," Bloom wrote in *The Closing of the American Mind,* and relativism was to him the certain sign of the uncertain future of civilization.

Regardless of what Bloom's students believed or said they believed, virtually no one other than professional philosophers truly espouses relativism, any more than anyone really acknowledges that he is "decadent." Students may profess relativism when they wish to question the morality of a punishment they don't want to suffer or of a war they don't want to fight or of any duty they don't want to perform, but they never invoke relativism when their own interests and preferences are at issue. Nor is the ruling class of the managerial regime relativist, for all its chatter about the obsolescence of sexual morality, the equality of races and cultures, and the impossibility of knowing the truth about God, the universe, and good and evil. Neither the managerial elite nor their offspring who idled away their youths listening to Professor Bloom are relativists when it comes to punishing John Demjanjuk, General Pinochet, or Timothy McVeigh. When inner-city blacks riot, the pet journalists and commentators of the managerial class whine and whimper for weeks afterward about the need to explore the "roots of the rage," but when suburban whites resist forced integration and busing, or a white separatist in Idaho refuses to answer a court summons, it's time to call in the troops and shoot to kill. College students may embrace relativism when they want to shack up with their girlfriends, but they are not relativists about "hate crimes," "racism," "sexism," "homophobia," or any of the other high crimes and misdemeanors that managerial morals condemn and which the managerial class does not hesitate to denounce, punish, and try to extirpate. It is simply not true that the current ruling class recognizes no morality and standards, and since it does recognize and try seriously to enforce the morals, standards, and rules that reflect its interests as an elite, it cannot be said to be decadent or to preside over a decadent society.

When in Rockford,

Eat at

Lee's Chinese Restaurant

3443 N. Main Street

What has been happening in the advanced industrial countries of the West for the past half-century is not merely the decline of civilization but the decline of one civilization and the emergence of another, as the ruling class that serves as the core of one civilization wanes and the class that forms the core of the other civilization waxes. The old "bourgeois" elite is in decline, not only in its influence and wealth in local and regional power bases and in owner-operated entrepreneurial firms, but in the values, moral codes, political formulas, and ideologies that reflect its worldview, its identity, and its sociopolitical interests. It is precisely because the old elite is in decline and being replaced by a new elite that the old civilization that formed the bulwark of the old elite is also disappearing, that its values are discarded as obsolete and repressive and its institutions, symbols, and heroes are eradicated or redefined as evil and tyrannical. So did Christianity redefine the pagan gods as demons, while converting pagan temples and festivals to Christian churches and holy days.

Nevertheless, it is preposterous to compare the pathetic artifices of "managerial civilization" with the edifice of medieval Christendom or even with the vast civilizational leviathan of postmedieval modernity. Unlike both Christendom and modernism, managerialism has a serious problem: It has been unable to formulate a myth or a coherent worldview that represents the interests of its creators and rulers in the managerial class and also appeals to and mobilizes the loyalties and actions of its subject classes. Since it is militantly secularist, it cannot make much use of Christianity or any other traditional religion that acknowledges the reality of transcendence. Managerial religion is simply humanitarianism flavored with a bit of syrup siphoned off from Marxism and Third World ethnicity. Indeed, managerial society cannot make much use of myth at all. It is the nature of myth to be fundamentally irrational, and the rationalism of managerial society persists in refuting and exploding every myth that the managerial mythographers can manufacture. How many more managerial gods must fail before the whole pantheon and the empire it supports collapse?

It may be that managerial society will eventually articulate an effective rationalization of the social and political domination of technocracy. But so far, all that the managerial class has been able to come up with is the claim that what it has to offer is materially and economically superior to any alternative. In the managerial capitalism of John Kenneth Galbraith's "New Industrial State," you can make more money, buy more stuff, cure more diseases, have more facelifts, play with more toys, get more vacation time, and enjoy more orgasms than in medieval Christendom or the dour, frugal, and hardworking modernity that replaced it. The justification, at least so far, of the managerial regimes that prevail in the West is nothing more sophisticated than the kitchen debate between Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev at the World's Fair in 1960: We're better than you because we have dishwashers and you don't. The communist branch of managerial society offered exactly the same answer, except that it was unable to produce the dishwashers.

Of course, a civilization that can think of no better justification for itself than dishwashers and higher living standards can hardly be called a civilization at all. However useful its appeal to materialism may be in prosperous and successful times, it won't be able to use that appeal to justify the sacrifices and risks that real civilizations demand, sooner or later, in the course of their histories. How can it justify the wars it will have to fight, the lives it will have to lose, the failures and defeats that it, like all human enterprises, will inevitably have to experience? How, for that matter, can it even justify the disciplines that it has to impose on children, criminals, and internal enemies?

What appears to be the decadence of America or of Western civilization is in fact the result of a combination of two different phenomena, the real decadence of one elite that no longer understands or even believes in the civilization its forebears created and ruled and which it is now unwilling and unable to defend and transmit, and the moral and cultural emptiness of what purports to be the civilization destined to replace the one in decline. The first is dying and cannot be salvaged; the second is up for grabs, and whoever is able to press his hand on the wax of its animating myths will determine and define its content for as many millennia as the new civilization endures. c

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Letter From Michigan

by Greg Kaza

They Are Coming, Father Abraham

◆

Republican presidential nominee George W. Bush says that immigration "is not a problem to be solved. It is the sign of a successful nation. New Americans are to be welcomed as neighbors and not to be feared as strangers." In 1996, the Republican platform advocated an end to granting automatic citizenship to children born to illegal aliens. Under Bush, the 2000 platform does not mention "illegal immigration" or illegal aliens. As the Texas governor puts it: "Family values do not stop at the Rio Grande."

Yet immigration could emerge as a sleeper issue in Michigan, where freshman Republican U.S. Sen. Spencer Abraham is locked in a close race with Democratic U.S. Rep. Debbie Stabenow. As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee's immigration panel, Abraham supported a controversial increase in the number of skilled H1B visa workers from 65,000 to 115,000 per year. He later told the *Detroit News* that even more H1B visas should be granted to noncitizens. "I know some people criticize these visas," Abraham said. "But if we can't have those workers here, you can bet they'll go to their native countries and create competition." The odds favor Abraham in November: he has the power of incumbency and a substantial fundraising advantage over Stabenow, whose main claim to fame is that she is a career politician first elected to office in 1976. The grandson of Lebanese immigrants, the Harvard-educated Abraham is likely to benefit from a crossover vote among the country's largest bloc of Arab-Americans, based in metro Detroit, who tend to vote Democratic.

Abraham's position on immigration has been criticized by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which has been airing advertisements in Michigan. The FAIR ads contend that Abraham's legislation, S. 2045, would harm American high-tech workers by granting employers an unfair advantage over citizens who work in the industry. FAIR maintains that the bill contains no protection for the jobs or wages of native workers, and that it would permit employers to hire guest laborers instead of citizens and legal immigrants. Abraham's campaign has responded by calling the FAIR ads the work of "hate groups."

In 1994, Abraham was elected with 52 percent of the vote, defeating Democratic U.S. Rep. Bob Carr. The contest was a three-man race until the final ten days. Libertarian Jon Coon mounted a serious campaign based upon Second Amendment rights, blanketing Michigan with thousands of orange hunter signs. Abraham's supporters responded by airing electronic ads by rock star Ted Nugent, a staunch hunter/Second Amendment advocate. Coon still received about five percent of the vote.

This year, Abraham faces Stabenow, Libertarian Michael Corliss, and the Reform Party's Mark Forton, former chairman of the Republican Party in Macomb County, home of the Reagan Democrats. Among the candidates, only Forton opposes unlimited immigration. "If our population doubles in the 21st century as a result of immigration," Forton says, "America as we know it will not survive. We will lose our freedoms, our constitutional rights." He advocates a five-year moratorium on new immigration; making English the official language; repealing taxpayer benefits for illegal aliens, and restricting the influx of immigrants to "180,000 to 250,000 annually," the traditional norm.

Forton links open immigration to multilateral trade agreements such as NAFTA and GATT, charging that both have driven down the real wages of middle-class Americans. An autoworker for 35 years, Forton echoes Reform Party presidential nominee Pat Buchanan, who ran well in Michigan in the 1992 and 1996 Republican primaries. "Many corporations," Forton argues, "have become so immoral, so corrupt, that their first loyalty is no longer to America. They would rather pay a Third World worker a dollar a day than pay a working mother in America eight dollars an hour." Abraham's policies are "bringing Third World immigrants into this country to provide a source of cheap labor for corporations that make large campaign contributions," says Forton. "It's not just the automobile industry. It's most of America's high-paying manufacturing jobs." Michigan, he believes, "needs a U.S. senator from Michigan, not California."

The Republicans are ignoring Forton; there is little evidence that he is mounting as serious a campaign as Coon did in 1994. Although immigration could still emerge as a sleeper issue in debates, it is more likely to play a factor in the 2002 reapportionment. In a clever yet overlooked essay in the September 6 issue of *Inside Michigan Politics*, editor Bill Ballenger (a former Republican state senator) writes that the "Problem is, Abraham's approach to immigration has produced two results: Michigan is more likely to lose another seat in Congress after the next Census; and the Republican party will probably lose seats in the U.S. House it now holds to new districts in the South and West that will be won by Democrats, costing the GOP its hard-won majority." Ballenger cites the work of Stephen A. Camarota, a resident at the Center for Immigration Studies in Washington, D.C., who found, in a study coauthored by Texas A&M professor Dudley L. Boston, Jr., that the number of immigrants living in the United States has nearly tripled from 9.5 million (five percent of the population) in 1970 to 27 million (or ten percent) today. Seventy-five percent live in only six states, including California. To estimate the political impact of immigration, Camarota and Boston analyzed the 1990 census count and 2000 projections and then recalculated the apportionment of House seats. Industrial states such as Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania will lose seats, while immigrant-rich California will likely gain nine seats, making its electoral significance even greater.

Ballenger observes, "A cynic might opine that Abraham has already calculated that the Congressional seat Michigan may lose after 2000 is likely to be one

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now held by a Democrat, not a Republican. But that's what Republicans thought would happen after the 1990 Census, and it didn't work out that way." Back then, the Michigan Republican Party chair was Spencer Abraham.

Greg Kaza served three terms in the Michigan House of Representatives (1993-1998). He returned to his native Midwest recently after working on Capitol Hill analyzing the voting patterns of members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Letter From Rome

by Alberto Carosa

Al Gore and the Feces-Eater

Vice President Al Gore did not bother to answer the letter in which a dozen or so prominent Italian pro-family leaders, intellectuals, and politicians called for him to withdraw his endorsement of the recent World Gay Pride parade in Rome (see "Letter From Rome," August), but he did respond to a similar message from the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. On June 1, William Donohue, president of the League, sent a letter to Gore asking him to renounce his support for the parade and urging him to demand that the event be moved or delayed, since its venue and timing were chosen to offend the Roman Catholic Church.

Although Italians do not vote in U.S. presidential elections, Americans do, and this time Gore replied. In a letter dated July 3, Gore said that he would not rethink his position. Despite his respect for the Catholic Church, he believed that the larger issue was one of "tolerance." "Just as I will stand by you whenever you are working to fight intolerance on religious grounds, I also believe we need to be tolerant when it comes to sexual orientation as well," wrote Gore.

Donohue replied that his letter to the Vice President was occasioned by the intolerance toward Roman Catholicism displayed by the leaders of the World Gay Pride march. He added that Gore is so wedded to the radical homosexual agenda that he did not bother to comment on what the lesbian president of Circolo Mario Mieli, the main organizer of the event, said of the Pope: "F---you." In Donohue's opinion, "Gore's letter demonstrates how selective his commitment to tolerance really is."

The parade, held on July 8, featured an impressive lineup of anti-Christian and communist militants. The participants ranged from the heads of the three rumps of the old Italian Communist Party and eco-terrorists to anarcho-communists and Marco Pannella and Emma Bonino, two leaders of the Radical Party and trailblazers of the homosexual-rights movement. High-ranking Muslim and Masonic representatives were also present.

Despite triumphant claims, the march was a flop. Two years of groundwork, virtually unlimited funds, favorable media coverage, and the formal support of a vast array of prominent international figures produced a parade through ancient Rome totaling only 70,000 people, according to the official figure released by Questura di Roma (Rome's police headquarters). The fact that many of the participants were simply fellow travelers meant that the actual number of homosexuals converging on Rome from around the world was much, much lower.

The media's bias could be gauged by their ridiculously inflated crowd estimates, ranging from 200,000 to 500,000. The Reuters online newswire was a notable exception; its report mentioned "thousands of homosexuals" marching through Rome. Even the official figure was probably an exaggeration: Italy's communist-dominated government openly sided with the homosexual activists.

The event's flop infuriated the parade's organizers and their leftist sponsors, who blamed their failure on an anti-parade backlash triggered by grassroots pro-family groups. The secular newsmagazine *L'Espresso* reported that the gay-pride march was officially announced in early 2000 amid a calm, debate-free atmosphere, which radically changed within a few months. *L'Espresso* also noted that the confrontation between supporters and opponents of the parade had taken on crusading overtones.

The anti-gay-pride protests were made possible by the Italian parliament's failure to pass a bill outlawing any form of "politically incorrect" opposition under the pretext of fighting discrimination based on "sexual orientation." A Dutch gay-rights group demonstrated how the homosexual lobby will use this type of legislation, by announcing plans to sue the Pope on the grounds that his harsh comments in the aftermath of a recent international gay-rights demonstration constituted an incitement to hatred and discrimination.

Walter Veltroni, the leader of the communist-rump Left Democrats, has insisted on the need to enforce a law "introducing or extending" the ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation. Veltroni's stance was echoed in even stronger terms by the president of Circolo Mario Mieli. Mario Mieli was a communist and homosexual who committed suicide when he was 31. *Corriere della Sera*'s weekly supplement "Sette" has described him as an "intransigent marxist" with "an absolute sense of transgression . . . He wanted to destroy society." *La Repubblica*, a pro-homosexual paper, reports that Mieli's family was compelled to put him in a mental hospital after they found out that, in London (where Mieli had joined the Gay Liberation Front), he used to wear a fur coat with no clothes underneath and ask policemen to let him kiss them.

Mieli's most famous book, *Elementi di critica omosessuale* (1977), stressed, according to the Catholic news agency *Corrispondenza Romana*, "the importance of homosexual liberation as part of human emancipation." Mieli believed that "the full disinhibition of homoerotic tendencies is a prerequisite . . . for the establishment of communism." Mieli even considered as "enemies" those homosexuals who were reluctant to make their private lives public. Moreover, he argued that the triumph of the homosexual agenda would help bring about Marxist revolution: "the gradual liberation of the other suppressed tendencies of Eros will further strengthen the revolutionary movement."

Mieli did not simply propound these theories; he lived them. As *La Repubblica* reported, he toured Italy staging performances in which he "elegantly ate feces with his fingers and then drank his own urine, produced on the spot, in a close-up scene."

Does Gore's support of the gay-pride parade's organizers entail endorsing this "alternative" culinary habit? And does the Vice President agree with what former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell did during her concert in the Tor di Valle horse-racing complex? While singing, she was approached by a white-clad dancer playing the Pope, who knelt down and hugged her hips in a sexual posture.

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Halliwell has also made a video in which she appears dressed as a nun. But the former "Ginger Spice" is no longer only a singer: She has been appointed roving U.N. Population Fund Goodwill Ambassador, from which position she promotes safe sex and the wider use of condoms. Does Gore support her innovative approach to diplomacy, insulting and mocking the head of a sovereign state?

Before Americans go to the polls on November 7, they might want to know the Vice President's answers to these questions.

Alberto Carosa, the editor of Famiglia Domani Flash, *writes from Rome.*

Letter From Rieti

by Andrei Navrozov

Good Help Nowadays

◆

I start this story not at my own desk in the Palazzo Mocenigo, but in a hammock suspended between two graceful pine trees in a place called Oliveto, up in the Sabine Hills, an hour's drive from Rome. The settlement of a dozen houses is dominated by the Villa Parisi, a medieval *casale* set in a large hillside garden, which some friends from London have taken for a week's stay. The nearest big town, with a population of 45,830 according to the *44esima edizione della Guida Michelin* found in the rented car, is Rieti, but I did not come here to fret about sightseeing in Northern Lazio. I came here to make jokes, play cards, sleep, drink, and talk about the servants. In England, there is a name for this kind of summer divertissement, which is supposed to take place somewhere beyond the confines of the former Empire, usually in Greece, Spain, or Italy. It is called a villa holiday.

Of course, the arrangements have been made through a London agency, which knows as much about Italy as the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times* knows about Russia, and—if such a monster can be imagined—is even more defensively verbose. Accordingly, once the promised luxuries have been paid for in advance, the tenants receive a descriptive folder of several hundred pages, complete with slightly inaccurate maps and wholly imaginary menus, that boils down to something like this: "Just bring your own bloody towels, buy your own bloody Scotch, stay on the bloody terrace, and for Heaven's sake don't bother the servants. They are foreign, and we don't know what they're saying." Consequently, what we are given here is the kitchen equivalent of Vladimir Putin's autobiography, which may be just as well. Like Byron in Venice, I worry about getting fat.

What do I tell my English friends about the servant problem? That there is a reason why I fell for their idea of the villa holiday, apart from the pleasure of seeing them. Our Stakhanovite nanny and housekeeper of four years, Sandra, who had come with us from London to Rome, and later to Venice, handed in her resignation a few weeks ago. In London, she once chased away an *Evening Standard* reporter, who thought he would take a sentimental photograph of my son playing among the daffodils in Hyde Park, with a softly spoken Russian phrase that means "I'll rip your mouth." In Rome, asked what she thought of the Italians, she answered: "They are a noisy and shameless people." It was in Venice that this loyal, hardworking, and God-fearing woman was finally corrupted, and, of course, it would be hypocritical to blame her: The purple pink light of the setting sun reflecting off the stone façades of the Giudecca is clearly unsuited to the task of vacuuming a child's bedroom. Like me, poor Sandra realized that what she really wanted was to sit in the café all day and drink Aperol spritzers, and that this great pleasure actually cost very little.

The corruption takes hold of the victim in slow increments, Italian life as a whole only too ready to supply an object lesson at every step. "*Buon giorno, Signora!*" It would never occur to the average Russian of Sandra's generation, the last to graduate from Stalin's university of life, to comment on the weather to a total stranger. "For that *we* have meteorologists. Ah, you beg to differ? Then you're probably a Trotskyist spy." It would never occur to us to address a maid as "Madame." "What's that you're playing at? Bourgeois egalitarianism? In *our* country people are shot for less." Indeed, it has taken the death of 100 million of our countrymen to teach the other 100 million to mind their own business, so it would seem that the very least I can count on there, by way of personal benefit, is a good maid.

But eventually the *bonhomie* routine grinds down the toughest Stakhanovite, and she dissolves in all that wretched civility like powdered sugar. Before you know it, she is no longer an anodized-steel bolt holding together an infinitesimal part of a vast statist machine—such as the employer's household—but a vulgar Western chatterbox, a nosy know-it-all with a diversity of subjective preoccupations, a "wicked and slothful servant" laboring in the belief that disobedience is a substitute for talent. She has become a person, a citizen, a god.

If individual talent is, as I believe, the only acceptable excuse for democratic delusions of this kind, then Margarita, our cook, represents the Western ideal. Margarita speaks only dialect, with the consequence that when she wants to express the most basic thought—even one so proverbially simple as "different strokes for different folks"—something altogether gorgeous and outlandish, like the San Marco cathedral, emerges from her island brain. "*Ghe se queó,*" she says, rolling up her sleeves to plunge a pair of powerful arms into the colorful chaos of a postprandial sink, "*che ghe piase ciuciar el caenasso,*" meaning, "some people like to lick a lock." We all adore her, a Venetian to the marrow of her soup bones, in part because her Italian is as bad as ours.

I met her through her husband, a leading fishmonger in the Rialto market who had already won our not inconsiderable custom. Then, one day, my friend Alberto brought over a dozen wild ducks he had shot, still in feather. With that millstone around my neck, in pouring rain—it was some time before the Madonna della Salute, and unless you are a hunter the weather is terrible—I made fruitless rounds of Venice's butchers, hoping to get them plucked at any price, until finally I came to the Rialto and saw Beppe, in his white apron, presiding over his *banco*. Before I could finish my tale of woe, he swept all the fish remains before him into the gutter with a majestic stroke of a giant blade and, with the same gracefully curved movement, cut the tie that bound the birds together.

It was a kind of European Community nightmare. Feathers flew as far as the eye could see, drifting flirtatiously over the snowy banks of bass and sole. Under the roof of the covered market, a crowd gathered, Venetians and *foresti* in equal numbers. The foreigners spoke in hushed un-

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dertones among themselves, lamenting the barbarity of a country that allows meat and fish to be handled on the same premises. The natives were louder, but more curious than incensed: "What's that you're doing?" they would ask. "Oh, nothing," Beppe would reply, relishing the conflict between the individual and the mass, "just some new kind of octopus I got in. With feather on 'em." When, some months later, Beppe offered us a Venetian as a cook, all he said by way of recommendation was that she is his wife. Or maybe he offered us his wife as a cook and said, by way of recommendation, that she is Venetian.

There is a story about Byron, which the late Sir Peter Quennell had dug up while researching the circumstances of his life at the Palazzo Mocenigo, involving a local type reminiscent of our own Margarita. "La Fornarina," the baker's wife who became the poet's mistress and later his housekeeper, once snatched off the mask of a noblewoman who happened at that moment to have accepted Byron's arm. When he later reproached her, explaining that Madame Contarini is a lady, she snapped back: "She may be a lady, but I am a Venetian!" How well that defiant *mi son Venexiana*! would sit on our beloved Margarita's lightly mustachioed lips. No wonder Byron worried about his weight.

Margarita took over the household until Sandra's replacement could arrive from Moscow. It quickly turned out that the selfsame qualities that made her a legend in our kitchen—her innovative boldness bordering on recklessness, her open disdain for everything with a printed label, her fierce sense of independence—were grossly counterproductive in a maid. *Mi son Venexiana*! In a week's time, the house was laid waste, with that morning-after feeling about it, as if somebody had tearfully asked a couple of bachelors not to trash the place. Plants killed, papers missing, books moved, ashtrays full, laundry dirty, the iron broken, Beppe watching football in the kitchen, Margarita's daughter sunbathing on the terrace, and Margarita herself nowhere to be seen. "Do not ask Chaliapin to represent you in court, demur if Cicero offers to sing for you, and never assume that a talented cook will make a dutiful housekeeper," was how I finished telling the story to my friends at the Villa Parisi.

The following Sunday, I was at the Marco Polo airport to collect Vera. There is a moment on the way back, once the boat enters Venice and crawls out into the Grand Canal at Ca' d'Oro, that is so absurdly unforgettable that I, not content to relive it daily in the freeze-frame of my own window, seize every opportunity to go to the airport just to experience it afresh. And there I was, watching Vera next to me, Vera who had never been out of Russia, Vera about to collide, at five kilometers an hour, with the absurdly unforgettable moment, watching her and thinking, "Well? Well? What will she say?"

Nothing. She never even looked up once. The Grand Canal is none of her business. She is the Stakhanovite maid I want.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From Kosovo

by Marko Lopusina

The Gate to Quagmire

◆

A team of Yugoslav journalists from *Narodni Telegraf* recently visited Camp Bondsteel, invited as guests to what used to be their country.

Bondsteel is the largest U.S. military base in the Balkans, and in what seems a bad omen, the biggest that the U.S. military has constructed since Vietnam. It is being erected in the heart of Kosovo, on the crossroads with Metohija, which allows American forces to control the borders of both Serbia and Macedonia. The location was selected by a special Pentagon team of military strategists and planners. The construction of the base began within weeks of NATO's takeover of Kosovo in June 1999. Given the logistics and the size of the effort, the plans must have been in place well before NATO launched its air war. (But that's another story.)

The base is named after infantry Sgt. James Leroy Bondsteel, who was killed in Vietnam in 1969—another bad omen. "All you can see here is built to last five years," explains Captain Russell Berg, the media liaison officer at the main headquarters. However, the scale of the construction of Camp Bondsteel raises doubts: Would such massive amounts of money and effort be invested in a base that's only going to be used for five years? The camp is being built on 700 acres of land that, only a year ago, was known as Sojevo, a Serbian agricultural farm. It is surrounded by 14 kilometers of barbed wire. Every inch inside the encampment is separately fenced and illuminated at night with dozens of reflectors: The base shines from afar in the Kosovo night. The few remaining Serbs who used to farm the land call it "Las Vegas in the mud."

Camp Bondsteel is intended to hold 5,000 military personnel, with 3,300 already in place. It is being constructed in three phases and is now 80 percent completed. There are 160 barracks housing 24 U.S. military units and seven KFOR formations. The barracks are fenced with a tall double line of sandbags strengthened with steel wire. "Security effort," Capt. Berg explains. "Our experience from Lebanon, where terrorists attacked us, taught us something, and everything in base is done by our rules to provide maximum security and defense from possible terrorists." I can't help but wonder which terrorists the Americans are thinking of. Although the Americans blame the tension in Mitrovica on Slobodan Milosevic, they generally avoid the subject of what is to be expected from Albanians in the future. Heads turn away; questions go unanswered. The air is thick with tension. As a Serb, I understand.

At Camp Bondsteel, the GIs can exit the base only on "official business"—in other words, when they are patrolling in squads outside to "keep the peace." We witnessed the exercise of a special military police unit that conducted the infamous weapons search in Kosovska Mitrovica in late February. They practiced the tactics of holding and attacking protesters. Who will the next protesters be? Who will be the next enemy? Capt. Art Horton from North Carolina, the commander of the exercise, is ready with the answer: "We are ready to intercede everywhere, at any time, and against anyone." Capt. Mark Chitwood, the head of military police, is quick to add: "Our standpoint is that no American soldiers should go to Mitrovica again since the situation in that city is way too difficult and if we go there, we'll only make it worse."

In the meantime, Bondsteel grows by the hour. It is so enormous that there is a "city transport" organized for its inhabitants. Three white buses with about 30 passengers each depart from the main

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square of the camp every 15 minutes. The true costs of maintaining Bondsteel are not available—to all our inquiries about the price tag, Captain Berg's response was "a few million dollars." According to various estimates in the U.S. media, $300 million has been spent on the camp so far. Before departing, we had a snack at an enormous restaurant serving 25 kinds of meals and 10,000 portions a day. It was opened by Bill Clinton on November 23, 1999. There is already a supermarket and a Burger King. All of this for five years? What is becoming the biggest American town in Europe was certainly designed to last far longer.

The ghost of Sgt. James Leroy Bondsteel haunts the campgrounds, and his fate should serve as a warning to those who think that America's mission in Kosovo has been accomplished: By Balkan standards, the war has not even begun.

Marko Lopusina, a Belgrade-based journalist who has covered international, Balkan, and Yugoslav politics for over 20 years, is the author of Wars, Lies, and Videotapes: The CIA and the News Media Against Yugoslavia.

Letter From Inner Israel

by Jacob Neusner

Post-Zionism and America

◆

Contemporary debates on the nature of American nationality—are we a people possessed of a shared tradition and culture, or are we simply a mosaic of ethnic groups that function in a common system?—find their counterpart in contemporary Israel. The legitimacy of Israel as "the Jewish state" is called into question not by Palestinians or Israeli Arabs but by Israeli Jews, most of them children of several generations of Zionists. These "post-Zionists" seek to transform Israel into a mere political contrivance rather than a "Jewish state."

The very legitimacy of the Jewish state has been challenged by Israeli intellectuals: philosophers and lawyers, poets and novelists, journalists and television personalities. The belief that a sovereign Jewish state is illegitimate enjoys wide acceptance in Israel.

The implications of post-Zionism transcend the particularities of Jewish politics. At stake—as in Germany, Russia, America, Canada, and Australia—is the nature of the nation-state. Canadians and Australians have decided to treat their national cultures as negotiable; Russia, Germany, and America are struggling with the notion that a nation represents more than an agreement among diverse people to share common real estate and a common market. Is it acceptable not to regard English as central to American life? Do Americans have a common history, a narrative that all of us tell about ourselves and our country, even though not all of us have ancestors who participated in that story? These are the issues in America that parallel the Israeli debate. And just as American history is supposed to teach that the United States was always wrong, so Israeli historians seek to dismiss the notion of the Jews as a unitary and distinct people.

Yoram Hazony, in a remarkable new book, *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul*, documents the ongoing attempt to dismantle the intellectual foundations of Israel as a Jewish state. He names names and outlines the history of this anti-Zionist worldview. He finds the sources of today's intellectual anti-Zionism in the universalism of German Jews from the 19th century forward. He traces the transfer of that ideology to the state of Israel through Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem, among others, and singles out the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as the center of post-Zionism. It is not surprising that he could not get his book published in Israel until it had created a sensation in the United States.

The book contrasts the Zionist with the post-Zionist definition of Israeli education. Jewish nationalist aims of the school system involved teaching "the values of Jewish culture," "love of the homeland," and "loyalty to the Jewish people." Now, the goals are "to work to realize democratic values . . . to work to realize human rights and civil rights . . . to be involved in the affairs of the public and of society." Hazony finds "disproportional emphasis on purely universal values as opposed to Jewish ones." The Ministry of Education has just issued *To be Citizens in Israel*, which presents the idea of Israel as a Jewish state as merely one option among many: "Nation-states" are simply a matter of choice. Hazony cites Asa Kasher, a professor of philosophy at Tel Aviv University:

> "A Jewish state" is a state in whose social coloration there is found the clear expression of . . . the Jewish identities of its citizens. In a "Jewish and democratic" state this social coloration is not created by force nor in the law but rather through the aggregation of the free choices of the citizens.

Hazony argues that the intellectual assault on Zionism, Americanism, and other definitions of the nation-state that link people to culture, language, tradition, and history finds its source in Rousseau, who

> set in motion the principles of the great revolution that would sunder the ties binding the peoples of Europe to their past . . . [H]e advanced the claim that there exists only one legitimate political constitution, universally applicable to all countries, which we may call a "social-contract state": a political regime in which all individuals, regardless of the differences of nature and history that divide them, renounce these differences, so that "all become equal through convention" under a state that obliges all equally on behalf of all.

No wonder, then, that the same debates rage throughout the world on the meaning of the nation-state: for instance, in Germany, in the form of the dispute over citizenship; and in the United States, over immigration policy and the positive reading of the American experience in history.

American Jews have taken two positions. In America, we have tended to favor a social-contract state, leaving ample space for minorities to maintain their distinct identities: Canada is the model. In Israel, American Jews favor the Zionist policy, affirming the Jewish people as an empowered political entity and the state of Israel as the instrument of that empowerment. While the language may shift, the issue endures, and the debate will continue.

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by Srdja Trifkovic

National Missile-Defense Deployment Postponed

On September 1, President Clinton announced that he would leave to his successor the decision on whether to move from research and development to deployment of the National Missile Defense (NMD).

The announcement to shelve the NMD was long overdue. The United States came very close to spending billions of dollars—and risking a confrontation with Russia and China, and a breach with its NATO allies—for the sake of an unworkable project based on fraudulent intelligence assessments and dubious technology.

The proponents of the NMD made extravagant claims about the danger of a surprise missile attack from a "rogue" state. Their campaign was supported by the defense industry and many GOP luminaries who have never seen a military spending bill they didn't like. Initially, President Clinton was on board, talking of "the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security" allegedly posed by the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright claimed that such proliferation was "the single most pressing threat to our security."

Until two years ago, the intelligence community in Washington did not find any evidence of this "unusual and extraordinary threat." In 1995, for instance, the annual National Intelligence Assessment reflected the foreign policy establishment's consensus: "[N]o country, other than the major declared nuclear powers, will develop or otherwise acquire a ballistic missile in the next 15 years" that could threaten the United States. Unhappy with this bland finding and under pressure from the military-industrial complex, Congress set up a commission charged with the task of producing a more sensational assessment. The result was the 1998 Rumsfeld Report.

With its gloomy appraisal of potential missile threats, the report became the rationale for the entire NMD campaign, but it arrived at its alarming conclusions by subterfuge. The commission's investigation did not consider the likelihood of missile threats; rather, its conclusions were based on a worst-case scenario. Yet the findings were presented to the public as conceptually and methodologically "neutral." Intelligence analysts who were shocked at the fraudulent manipulation of data were told to keep quiet or they would lose their jobs. The official line was that we should anticipate ICBM threats not only from Russia, China, and North Korea, but from third-rate powers such as Iran and Iraq.

Independent expert opinion could not be muzzled, however. In Senate testimony last February, the Carnegie Foundation's arms-control expert Joseph Cirincione pointed out that "the number of countries trying or threatening to develop long-range ballistic missiles has not changed greatly in 15 years, and is actually smaller than in the past." He demonstrated how the NMD advocates had manipulated threat-assessment methodology, distorting the result. In addition, the proponents of NMD never presented a credible scenario of a "rogue" attack on the United States. They simply assumed that countries which are capable of developing advanced missile technology have, at the same time, decisionmaking structures that are suicidal, irrational, and devoid of strategic thinking. In fact, most "rogue" states are led by unpleasant but perfectly rational people: Neither Saddam nor Kim Jong Il has shown any desire to destroy himself in a grand gesture of spiteful vengeance.

The real threat to America—especially to its large cities—comes from terrorist groups, not states. Intelligence experts think that any attack would be biological rather than nuclear, and that the method of delivery is more likely to be a smuggled suitcase than a ballistic missile. Can America defend against such a threat? As Charley Reese put it even before the NMD hit the headlines, "terrorism is a political act, a response to U.S. foreign policy. It is an act of war waged by people too weak to have a conventional army or one large enough to take on the United States." The solution to terrorism is to end the policies that foster it.

The Rumsfeld Report unwittingly supported this view when it stated that "a number of countries with regional ambitions do not welcome the U.S. role as a stabilizing power in their regions . . . they want to place restraints on the U.S. capability to project power or influence into their regions." Here is the core problem: NMD advocates assume the desirability of American global hegemony as the basis of U.S. foreign policy, while any criticism of the NMD and its fraudulent intellectual underpinnings also challenges America's unrestrained projection of power. The report's authors implicitly admit that the United States is threatened *because* of its policy of global hegemony.

If American interests are assumed to include the ability to project power everywhere and at all times, then threats are also perceived to be unlimited and permanent. Given current U.S. policies abroad, NMD would indicate to the world that the United States has hostile intentions: the desire to bomb foreigners while avoiding retaliation. Short of a radical change in U.S. diplomacy, a viable antiballistic shield above America would be the equivalent of giving a trigger-happy sniper a bulletproof vest.

The immediate reason for President Clinton's decision to postpone NMD deployment was technical: The two most recent tests failed miserably; the dummy attack missiles reached their targets. As a consequence, NMD is increasingly seen as untenable not only on technical, but on strategic and political, grounds.

While President Clinton did not address fundamental objections to NMD, the postponement may prove indefinite. "We should not move forward until we have absolute confidence that the system will work," Clinton said. Such certainty will be unattainable for decades: A missile defense guaranteed to work against an enemy who can launch large numbers of projectiles and deploy sophisticated countermeasures is not even on the drawing board.

That is a good thing, because it may remind Americans that our security does not rest on an antimissile system, but in a prudent diplomacy backed by a strong military capable of defending this country's territory and its national interests.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Globetrotters: Bush and Gore on Foreign Policy

by Jeffrey Thomas Kuhner

"It's the economy, stupid" is once again the slogan of the Democratic presidential campaign, but this time around it is also the Republican slogan. The exclusive focus on domestic issues may reflect a general American contempt for all things foreign, but there is another reason for the lack of debate on foreign policy: There is no fundamental difference in the candidates' approach to diplomacy.

Both Al Gore and George Bush endorse the globalist interventionism of the Clinton administration. On most issues, Bush and Gore share the same positions: Both supported NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia; both favor NATO enlargement; both would seek funding for a national missile-defense system; both are staunch defenders of NAFTA, PNTR with China (and its ascension into the WTO), and economic globalization; and both want to maintain the crippling economic sanctions against Iraq and Cuba. A Bush or Gore presidency would continue to maintain a unipolar world order based on American hegemony, free trade, and open borders.

Yet, for all their similarities, there are some nuanced distinctions between the two candidates that reveal much about the current state of their respective parties. Gore is a humanitarian neo-Wilsonian who is more hawkish than President Clinton. Throughout his political career, the Vice President has been a rare breed in the Democratic Party: A big-government liberal who has called for heavy military spending. While in Congress and as veep, Gore has consistently supported the use of American power—the invasion of Grenada in 1983, the Gulf War, the interventions in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo. In fact, the Vice President's top advisors have admitted that, whenever the President wavered on certain military actions (such as the invasion of Haiti or the airstrikes on the Bosnian Serbs), Gore loudly beat the drums of war, leading the interventionist faction within the Clinton administration.

Unlike the reign of Gore's boss, who viewed foreign policy as a short-term tool to manipulate domestic public opinion during the Lewinsky scandal or to advance the interests of big business who are major contributors to the Democratic Party, a Gore presidency would take Clintonism to its logical conclusion. Gore is the consummate globalist. There is no corner of the world that he does not consider as part of the "vital security interests" of the United States. The core of his foreign policy is what he has called "forward engagement," nipping in the bud potentially "disruptive" problems such as global warming, the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, the spread of destructive diseases like AIDS, and the threat of terrorism from "rogue states."

Gore stresses that, with the end of the Cold War, we are now living in a "New Global Age" in which the "traditional nation-state is changing." Hence, the United States must pump more money into its military, intervene in trouble spots around the world, and provide greater "leadership" and funds to international and regional institutions in order to secure global stability. Yet the Vice President is more than a foreign policy busybody: He is a revolutionary utopian. Gore believes that it is the responsibility of the United States to "promote the prosperity" of the world's poorest regions and to improve living standards for billions of people "who make less than a dollar a day." Even Bill Clinton and Madeleine Albright never expressed this kind of overweening internationalism.

If Gore wins in November, Africa will likely emerge as the next major area for American intervention. The Vice President has repeatedly criticized his Republican opponent for failing to include Africa in America's sphere of "strategic influence," attacking the Texas governor (and implicitly Clinton) for not demanding the use of American and U.N. troops to prevent the genocide in Rwanda. Gore's policy toward Africa is a recipe for endless U.S. military action. The debacle in Somalia should have taught the Vice President that the African continent is riven with ethnic conflicts which can bog down the United States in countless guerrilla wars.

Bush, on the other hand, has a better understanding of the relationship between military means and geopolitical ends. He is a realist internationalist who believes that "Eurasia" is America's greatest strategic priority. Like all establishment Republicans, his most important goal is opening markets in Asia and Europe for multinational corporations.

Under the influence of ultra-hawkish advisors such as Condoleeza Rice and Paul Wolfowitz, the Texas governor is invoking fears of a revanchist Russia and an expansionist China. Many Beltway pundits have argued that Bush's strategic vision closely resembles the Reagan doctrine. As usual, they are wrong. Instead, Bush's diplomacy is similar to that of Nixon and Kissinger. Bush promotes a policy of triangulation that seeks to contain both the Russian Bear and Red China. There is one crucial difference, however, between Bush's foreign policy and that of Nixon during the early 1970's: With the fall of the Berlin Wall, neither country poses a threat to the United States.

This has not stopped the Texas governor from making belligerent statements, and a Bush presidency would put the United States on a path toward confrontation with Moscow and Beijing. Bush has suggested NATO enlargement into the Balkans. Moreover, he has gone further than either Clinton or Gore in demanding that Kosovo not only remain an international protectorate but eventually be detached from Serbia and given full independence—an act that would undermine Moscow's traditional sphere of influence in the Balkans and threaten its tenuous hold over Chechnya. Bush has also called for providing greater economic and military assistance to the Ukraine and the Baltic states to act as a buffer against the possible restoration of the Russian empire. Even if Moscow sought to reconstitute the old czarist empire (assuming this is possible, given Russia's imploding economy and its recent dismal military performance in the Cau-

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casus), Russia poses no threat to the vital interests of the United States. But a Bush victory would continue the policy of humiliating Russia, turning it from a vanquished ally into a resentful enemy seething with rage at the United States.

In Asia, Bush's goal is to expand trade with China while constructing an anti-communist ring of states around it, relying on Japan as the primary bulwark and guaranteeing the security of Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. Bush's foreign-policy team has also called for supporting India as a major Asian power to weaken China's influence over the region. However, Beijing—for all of its belligerent nationalism—does not threaten American strategic interests, and Bush's policy of containment will only aggravate tensions between China and the United States, possibly setting the stage for another Asian war in the future.

The Texas governor is most dangerous on the issue of Mexico and Latin America, where he shows himself to be a multicultural globalist who possesses no conception of the United States as a distinct nation-state with its own cultural identity and interests. In a speech in Miami, Bush told a largely Hispanic audience that "America has one national creed, but many accents. We are now one of the largest Spanish-speaking nations in the world. We're a major source of Latin music, journalism, and culture." He went on to say, "Just go to Miami, or San Antonio, Los Angeles, Chicago or West New York, New Jersey . . . and close your eyes and listen. You could just as easily be in Santo Domingo or Santiago, or San Miguel de Allende." "By nominating me," Bush boasted, "my party has made a choice to welcome the new America." Indeed it has. Bush's "new America," based on unlimited immigration, celebrates the transformation of the United States into an Hispanic nation, abandoning the country's cultural and constitutional heritage.

During his tenure as governor of Texas, Bush has engaged in a longstanding love affair with Mexico and shamelessly pandered to the Hispanic voters in his state: He not only supported NAFTA but called for bilingual education and opposed Proposition 187. Bush also has enjoyed a cozy relationship with Mexico's notoriously corrupt 70-year ruling party. The fact that the PRI is now out of power has not stopped Bush from championing a Western hemispheric free-trade zone and declaring that one of his first acts as president will be to ask Congress for fast-track authority to extend NAFTA to Chile, Brazil, and Argentina, eventually encompassing all of Latin America. Whatever remains of America's manufacturing base will wither away under a Bush presidency, and America's slide toward a two-tiered society of "haves and have-nots" will continue.

There is nothing "conservative" about Bush's internationalist brand of dollar diplomacy. It is not just that he is vacuous and pathetically uninformed, referring to Greeks as "Grecians" or confusing Slovenia with Slovakia, but that he does not grasp the essence of a successful foreign policy: It must be based strictly on the national interest. The major conservative European statesmen of the 19th century, such as Metternich, Bismarck, and Lord Salisbury, understood that the key to a secure and stable world depends upon balance-of-power diplomacy. Power and self-interest, not idealism, best ensure stability and peace in the international arena.

Neither Gore nor Bush understands that America's hubris and meddlesome interventions of the past decade have left the United States in a precarious position. Rather than focusing on untapped markets in Latin America or Africa, or imaginary security threats posed by global warming or Russian imperialism, both men would better serve their country's national interests by concentrating on problems closer to home—the porous border with Mexico, the onslaught of unlimited immigration, the likely breakup of Canada within the next decade, and the loss of state sovereignty and national identity. But that would require a disciplined foreign policy, which is beyond the capacity of either candidate.

Jeffrey Thomas Kuhner is the assistant editor of Chronicles.

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HISTORY

Our Presidents in Song

by David B. Kopel

Bill Clinton and George Bush, Sr., share something: They are the only presidents since George Washington who were elected without having a campaign song written for them. Perhaps as a reflection of the vacuousness of their platforms, the two candidates used popular songs for their campaigns. George Bush surely made Woody Guthrie spin in his grave by adopting "This Land Is Your Land." Bill Clinton did better with

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Fleetwood Mac's apolitical "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow."

George W. Bush, however, appears to be willing to learn from some of his father's mistakes: The day he accepted the Republican nomination, his campaign released its original, official song. The country song says nothing about Bush, but it does extol working people. It is also one of the first presidential campaign songs to have an original tune, as opposed to the common practice of setting new words to well-known music.

Does a president's campaign song reveal something significant about the man, or the people who elected him? Judging by the compact disc *Presidential Campaign Songs 1789-1996* from the Smithsonian Institution's Folkway series, the answer seems to be yes.

John Quincy Adams, who established the Smithsonian, would be delighted that his museum has restored an important part of American political history. He would also be appalled at the decline in character, patriotism, and education that is revealed by contrasting the earlier songs with those of the 20th century.

Consider the decline of cultural literacy. In 1856, James Buchanan proclaimed "there is balm in Gilead" (Jeremiah 8:22). In 1796, John Adams could invoke the Battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.), urging voters to imitate the great Spartan king who led the Greeks against the immense Persian army: to "unite heart in hand, like Leonidis's band."

Religion has also been banished, although it once appeared frequently in campaign songs. William Henry Harrison's "The Harrison Yankee Doodle" egotistically echoed the Lord's Prayer with "Thy will be done with Harrison; log cabin and hard cider." In "Lincoln and Liberty," abolitionism was referred to as "the Great Reformation," and the song extolled Lincoln's debating skills by claiming "our good David's sling is unerring." "Adams and Liberty" could promise that war's lightning "bolts could not render freedom's temple asunder"—an explicit reference to the lightning strike that sundered the temple in Jerusalem when Jesus died. "Huzzah for Madison, Huzzah" returned to the America-as-temple metaphor, for "unshaken still the Temple stands." Even Jefferson's campaign song urged Americans to commit their "soul" to liberty.

In the 19th century, almost every voting American, atheists included, understood references to Jeremiah, King David, and the life of Jesus. Today, few Americans would even know what was being mentioned, let alone approve of identifying America's freedom with God's will.

Freedom itself is no longer celebrated. Adams' supporters could sing that "ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves," while Jefferson's supporters were urged: "to tyrants never bend the knee." Should the British attack, "the Heavens would soon interpose," boasted Madison's song.

In the 20th century, however, almost all the songs have been vapid odes to the candidate's personality, rarely daring to mention God or liberty, or even using an idea unfamiliar to a sixth-grader.

The campaign tune that most closely resembles Bush's current paean to the people is the 1816 song "Monroe Is the Man." But while Bush's song celebrates people who work hard at their jobs, Monroe's reminded Americans of their civic duties: "Oh say sovereign people, whose voice is the law, whose will is supreme, and keeps faction in awe."

Unfortunately for John Quincy Adams, the Smithsonian dutifully records his 1828 campaign song, which still sets the record for excessive hysteria. "Little Know Ye Who's Comin'" reeled off a litany of warnings about Andrew Jackson, climaxing with "Satan's coming, if John Quincy's not elected."

Jackson, of course, turned out to be a much better president than his detractors had expected. His brand of democratic populism transformed American politics, and his campaign song reflected this. "The Hunters of Kentucky" achieved acclaim as a song in its own right; the melody and words had a popular appeal far beyond the stilted songs of almost every other presidential candidate. It is a vivid celebration of the great American victory over the British at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815—quite unlike Gerald Ford's pathetic "I'm feeling good about America . . . and I'm feeling good about me."

The Jackson/Van Buren Democrats mastered the art of popular politics in the new era of the "common man." The Whigs (like George W. Bush today) proved that they could learn from experience, by putting forth in 1840 a pointless but catchy tune, "Tip and Ty," urging voters to join "the ball a rollin' on for Tippecanoe and Tyler too." (Men rolling a giant Harrison ball from town to town was a popular campaign event.)

After the Civil War, Republican campaign songs were sung to the tune of popular war songs: "Grant, Grant, Grant" to the tune of "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp" or "Just Before Election, Andy" to "Just Before the Battle, Mother." (This last song was obsolete before its time, since President Andrew Johnson was denied renomination.)

The Civil War obsession made sense for the 1868 election, but the Republicans demonstrated their hollowness by sticking to this theme even in 1880, warning that "If the Johnnies Get into Power" ("When Johnny Comes Marching Home") they would desecrate Lincoln's tomb and change the flag's stripes into "rebel bars." This absurd charge was made despite the fact that the Democratic candidate was Winfield Scott Hancock, a retired Union general.

No Smithsonian product would be complete without at least a few additions designed to make people resent being Americans. The Smithsonian liner notes (written by the CD's performer, Oscar Brand) deliberately foster anti-Americanism. They point out that, when Washington was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1757, he held campaign events at which large quantities of liquor were distributed. But this was a standard campaign practice at the time.

The Smithsonian also misleadingly claims that the electorate during Washington's time was composed of "white males owning at least 50 acres or the equivalent." This is no more than a half-truth, since several states allowed free blacks to vote, and many states had less stringent property requirements.

The liner notes also have socialist overtones. The reader is told that Madison observed that "the most common source of friction in society is the unequal distribution of property" and is led to think that Madison favored redistribution of property. However, a primary purpose of the Constitution, which Madison largely wrote, was to prevent democratic government from confiscating the property of the wealthy to give to the masses.

The liner notes also claim that Martin Van Buren "infuriated working people and businessmen by refusing to help them in the general depression." Yet Van Buren believed that the most effective way to end the Panic of 1837 was to prevent the state from meddling in the economy and to ensure that the federal government obeyed constitutional limits on its power.

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Not all the errors stem from anti-Americanism; some are the result of ignorance and sloppiness. Thus, the notes state that "Jefferson's first task as President was to repeal the Alien and Sedition Acts." Actually, the Acts were not repealed; they simply expired.

Likewise, "In 1829, Andrew Jackson . . . was decisively elected." The election was in 1828. During the Buchanan administration, "Mormons were threatening war in Utah"—a statement equivalent to "Belgians in 1914 were threatening war with Germany." Brand writes that Lyndon Johnson was "Majority Leader of the House of Representatives"; actually, he was Senate majority leader.

Fortunately, the value of the album lies not in the liner notes. (If you want to learn more about American political songs than the liner notes convey, have a used book service find you a copy of Irwin Silber's fascinating book *Songs America Voted By*, Stackpole, 1971.) While the songs reflect certain negative traits of the American political character, they can also inspire us to return to our highest principles—especially as expressed in the campaign tunes of our first six presidents. As the war song of the Father of our Country urges, "Follow, follow Washington . . . determined to be free my lads, determined to be free. Till freedom reigns, our happy bands, we'll fight like true Americans. With heart in hand and God our trust, we'll freely fight; our cause is just."

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SOCIETY

For What We Have Done, and What We Have Failed to Do

by Philip Jenkins

Before too long, Americans are going to be engaged in a heated debate over proposals to pay reparations for slavery. The idea has been floating around on the left for perhaps 30 years; but in the late 1990's, it gradually moved from the realm of the inconceivable to that of the nearly inevitable, the kind of trajectory followed by once-unthinkable notions like gay marriage or gun confiscation. Every year for the last decade, Rep. John Conyers has sought to introduce a bill "to examine the institution of slavery," subsequent "*de jure* and *de facto* discrimination against freed slaves and their descendants," and their impact "on living African-Americans." Congress would be called to consider "appropriate remedies." Although the measure has never reached the floor of the House of Representatives, a changing mood was indicated by the positive response to Randall Robinson's tract *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks* (Dutton, 2000) and its call for "national restitution." In the private sector as well, enterprising lawyers are now launching lawsuits against some of America's largest corporations, particularly in the Northeast, on the grounds that their wealth was founded on slavery. If German firms such as IG-Farben and Volkswagen can compensate slave laborers from the 1940's, why should U.S. companies such as Aetna not make similar payments to the descendants of black slaves from the 1840's? The discussion of reparations is coming, and, although this may startle some readers, I'd like to suggest some reasons why we should support the passage of such measures.

Let me say right away that the reparations idea would be historically groundless and socially destructive. This is not an attempt to vindicate slavery: I'm not a revisionist. But granting the horrors of slavery, any reasonable observer would agree that any debt has already been paid, possibly twice. It was amply paid in the blood of 600,000 American dead in the Civil War, to say nothing of the millions of lives ruined by that conflict. Arguably, the debt was paid again in the 1960's, when conflicts over segregation resulted in the destruction of states' rights and local autonomy and drove the United States into a hitherto unimaginable degree of authoritarian centralism.

Equally obvious are the flagrant injustices involved in a reparations policy, which is precisely why I would like to see a bill proposed by Congress as soon as possible. The ideas underlying reparations are those that have motivated much of contemporary liberal thought, but commentators have rarely tried to pursue them to their logical conclusions, out of a decent respect to the opinions of mankind. A reparations debate would force us to explore the implications of these ideas, and the consequences would be explosive. Some advocates would recoil at these implications, others might not, but in either case, the debate would have enormous educational power.

The reparations theory is based on several core ideas of modern liberalism that have flourished during the Clinton years. One is the notion that political society is a matter of group adherence rather than individual rights. What you are, and the rights to which you are entitled, depend on group membership, and in most cases, membership is determined by descent and biology. Such an approach has nothing to do with the Constitution, but it is the basis of social policies such as affirmative action. A reparations debate would force advocates of social-group theories to come clean about their assumptions.

Just who would receive reparations? There are no surviving ex-slaves, and precious few children of slaves, while Robinson and Conyers make it clear that they are not terribly interested in legal distinctions between those who were slaves or freedmen in antebellum America. Reparations would be directed toward "African-Americans"; for the first time in American history, a racial category would be explicitly entitled to financial payments not available to other groups. This is explicitly racial legislation, with payment to blacks coming from "whites": the descendants of Polish miners, Irish laborers, Jewish artisans, and Boston Brahmins, who are imagined to be a single homogeneous and privileged class of exploiters.

The next step would be to determine who is an African-American. I would very much hope that, on the first day a reparations policy is implemented, a couple of hundred million non-black Americans would present themselves at federal offices declaring their sincere belief that they are of slave ancestry and, therefore, entitled to a share of the loot. Meanwhile, lawyers would challenge the qualifications for payments to people commonly regarded as "black," on the basis that their light skins indicate racial admixture. I can't wait, by the way, to see the exact phrasing of a reparations bill, and its effort to make payments to blacks without explicit reference to skin color. Presumably, legislators will use some term such as "past or ancestral condition of involuntary servitude," thereby open-

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ing the floodgates to anyone who can find a white ancestor who was an indentured servant during the 17th or 18th centuries.

To decide who deserves reparations, the government will have to accept the logical consequence of a generation of affirmative-action policy and acknowledge the official, statutory establishment of a federal system of racial classification, preferably under a board with Cabinet-rank status. Classification would be a simple matter, as genetic science is now sufficiently advanced to decide the predominant racial identity or geographical origin of any person. Perhaps this genetic identification could be coded into a modified Social Security number or federal identification card.

While there would be ongoing controversy over people of half- or quarter-descent, the government would otherwise have a rock-solid basis on which to form future policies, not just in allocating reparations, but in shaping education and welfare policies, designing electoral districts, and so on. For example, we would know exactly which people living on the Hawaiian islands are entitled to shares in the multibillion dollar reparations to be paid by the United States for overthrowing the native monarchy back in the 1890's; or which self-described "Indians" could legitimately claim some of the wealth pouring in from the casino boom on reservations. American politics could move smoothly toward the kind of efficient classification proposed under the Nuremberg race laws and debated in such celebrated historical documents as the proceedings of the Wannsee conference. (But what about Jews of "three-quarter descent"? How about "half-Jews," *mischlings*?)

I wish I were joking about some of these trends, but I'm not. For the Indian example, see Jeff Benedict's book *Without Reservation* (HarperCollins, 2000), a shocking study of how the federal government decided that an ill-assorted bunch of Connecticut families suddenly declaring themselves to be "Mashantucket Pequot Indians" was in fact a lost tribe, entitled to all the rights and privileges that come with tribal status—including permission to build and run the Foxwoods casino, currently one of the biggest money-makers in the hemisphere. Like African-American reparations, the Indian and Hawaiian cases represent the growing tendency to award rights on the basis of descent and genetics, an idea that is unconstitutional, immoral, and (does anyone remember the word?) un-American.

A reparations bill would open wide the doors to all manner of subsequent claims, to the extent that our emerging system of race law would be driven to the point of collapse, which is where it belongs. Without race law, we might have to learn to live in a colorblind society, where everyone, regardless of genetic makeup, is regarded as equally entitled to certain basic rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It sounds radical, but it just might work.

As an added bonus, a reparations debate might limit the endless spiral of guilt and apology. Paying Japanese-Americans for internment during World War II might, arguably, have been justified, but look where we have gone since then. Connoisseurs of political eccentricity found a rare treasure in a report issued this past July by a special international panel formed by the Organization of African Unity to examine the genocide in Rwanda, where members of the Hutu tribe massacred several hundred thousand rival Tutsis. The panel demanded payment of a "significant level of reparations" by the United States and France, on the grounds that they had failed to prevent the tragedy. In the words of the Canadian spokesman, only such gigabucks could possibly purge "an almost incomprehensible scar of shame on American foreign policy." In other words, the United States should pay for doing nothing in a situation it had nothing to do with. Is the syntax of that last sentence any more bizarre than the idea it expresses?

Extending this principle, we could see a good deal of money changing hands internationally in the future: money paid by Canada, say, to apologize for not preventing the Chinese conquest of Tibet; by France, for its failure to save Atlanta from Sherman; and several trillion dollars worth of amnesty payments from the Arab world to the African regions from which it raided slaves for over half a millennium. (Which raises an interesting question: When I note black faces in the United States or the Caribbean, I can see the living descendants of the Atlantic slave trade, but where is the comparable black population in the Near East? Just how many of the Arabs' millions of slaves survived to bear children?)

In short, a reparations debate would immensely benefit the United States by raising countless delicate questions which need to be explored. We know that people believe this outrageous nonsense: Let's force them to say these things out loud. A reparations measure would almost certainly stir a general reaction that would have positive effects. And if it didn't—if the political elite were allowed to get away with this atrocity, with no more than token protests—that would at least prove, once and for all, that American democracy is too far gone to be worth saving. It would be nice to know once and for all.

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ART

The Case for Anonymous Art

by Peter Laurie

For all of living memory, they have been making this wilderness and calling it art. If you were there in Paris, as I was, for the public sale of the Picasso legacy belonging to the artist's mistress and model Dora Maar, you would know whereof I speak.

The masterpiece of this collection, *Weeping Woman*, probably the most repulsive work in portraiture up to its time (though successfully emulated since), inspired an hysteria of greed. Both the painting and its sale must rank as high-water marks in the incarnation of the hideous, the ongoing search for an ideal ugliness to characterize our time.

In this painting, Picasso has outdone himself, insulting his subject, the art of portraiture, all the artistic ideals of the West, and life itself. *And* it is not well painted. Which is to say one would be hard put to imagine paint laid to canvas in some less painterly way. That he made myriads of such paragons of anticraftsmanship can only imply that (beyond his contempt for his patrons) Picasso loathed himself.

There is a term for this state of soul, *taedium vitae*, for which our word "tedium" would seem too neutral. What it really means is that one abominates life.

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Many must have this affliction, since paintings radiant with the beauty of the artist and the model, pieces that prove Picasso could really paint if he wanted to, went for little money.

At the same time as the Paris sale, an American gallery mounted a retrospective of Jackson Pollock, whose fanfare one might have recited by heart: O that courageous, refreshingly nose-thumbing iconoclast! O so uniquely American originality! To have come up with a way of painting that annihilated it!

The inevitable product of an age obsessed with absolutes of individuality, Pollock confessed to having run his method into the ground before his offhand end, although many a tarmac splatted with pigeon droppings, and many a drop cloth besmirched, has taken on new meaning since. Meanwhile, two of Picasso's most formidable contemporaries, creators of modernism's defining works in music and poetry, have entered what one hopes is a temporary eclipse. (The hope is for humanity, the artists themselves being well out of it.) Igor Stravinsky and T.S. Eliot, after giving birth to monsters of provocation, reconsidered, and thought better of it. Their works, hardly ever considered together, are intimately interrelated. "The Waste Land," opening as it does with the now familiar dirge upon April's cruelty (which is assumed to parody the opening of *Canterbury Tales*), pays explicit homage to *The Rite of Spring*. Eliot had attended the London debut, risen to his feet in an audience nonplussed, and cheered.

Although they did not befriend one another until old age, both worked at different times in artistic seclusion on the same stretch of the Lake Geneva shoreline. The two works inspired almost identical public reactions, inciting a notoriety that amounted to scandal—in Stravinsky's case it was an actual riot—that soon gave both of them reputations exceeding their art. But there was also a prolonged crisis for the artists themselves, both of whom split off into shards of miserable modernism before embracing Christianity. Their conversions were regarded with an unease that equaled the original outcry. At the same time, both the poet and the composer were returning philosophically to the classical traditions of their arts, laboring doggedly to produce work to rival any in the realm of ideal beauty.

In a conjunction, unheralded and unpremeditated (as of stars), each in the course of 1930 unveiled another watershed masterwork—of spiritual surrender, this time—attuned to the public mood ensuing upon the Great Crash. Stravinsky's *A Symphony of Psalms* even shares a biblical text with Eliot's "Ash Wednesday." The *Exaudi supplicationem meam* with which the one begins and the "and let my prayer come unto Thee" with which the other ends, are the first and last lines of the same psalm.

This could only have been what it was taken for: a slap in the face of modernism, modernity, skepticism and all its works, though in each case, the despair was real. Their works also represented a revolt against the cult of personality that had rendered both of them so public, a cult adhered to by modernists of a wider sphere, including Stalin and Hitler, who presented themselves as saviors of mankind. Stravinsky and Eliot were denounced: Not only were they bourgeois decadents, they had failed to fulfill the promise of their apocalypses.

What, one wonders, was anyone imagining might be the sequel to a virgin's blood sacrifice or to the collapse of civilized consciousness with corpses in the street, other than what actually *did* happen during the 20th century? For some three centuries now, thoughtful minds (not usually those of artists) have been witness, Cassandra-like, to the coming war of all against all, although droves of sophists have humored us into paying no heed. Still, the big thing proceeds, chaotic and futilistic, to descend upon us.

But to take responsibility for the prophetic role that artists of the last century only dreamt of (and that several of ours have actually performed) is to embody something beyond mere personality and to move into the perennial, the catholic, the cosmic, the anonymously human. It requires us to defy the current axiom—that publicity is the only reality, a reality we must survive by living for things beyond ourselves and for others besides ourselves. Stravinsky and Eliot, as long as they lived, enjoyed uncommonly widespread, uncommonly perceptive, uncommonly devoted approbation, having voiced the unvoiced aspirations of a host of anonymous souls by becoming, themselves, anonymous souls.

Now, they must seem remote, as publicity's reality proclaims some poor soul the Hemingway of a new lost generation. I thread through a Paris whose bistros bulge with the new lost generation drinking alone in crowds, museums trafficked as the Metro, barren of Hemingway or other vestiges of former glories. I learn that "He" is dead. I learn that "He" was nothing but the creature of his editor whose vampire's knack transformed its victim's drivel into a cynical (if sleekly crafted) trash, truly expressive of its time.

And who is to blame? Audiences eagerly devour the hoax of personal celebrity, while would-be artists who have already thrown away their souls line up around the block to try to sell them again for sums that purchase barely a fleeting illusion of having lived. There can be no question of actual art in such a world.

As the Battle of Britain loomed, Eliot closed his magazine, *The Criterion*, by sounding a somber note from the Dark Ages. There would be, he predicted, no more organized culture for the foreseeable future. In spite of the Allied victory, by the 1960's, there was none. Meanwhile, the counterculture resembled culture as a black hole resembles a solar system. An aged Picasso appeared in *Life* on the pot. He conceded that he was not a great painter: "Raffaello, Velasquez, Vermeer, *they* were. I am only a public entertainer." Stravinsky, his end impending, offered some last advice to composers of the future: "Make a million. Only if it comes easy. Otherwise, head underground."

In a previous darkening time, as Rome succumbed, as the bishop of Hippo turned his mind to eternal things, the citizens of the city went underground, sequestering what remained of civility, literacy, the arts, within an anonymity of innovation, the manor monastery, consecrated to the renewal of the world by fostering the soul out of the soil. In time, Cassiodorus and Benedict carried their point. They renewed the world.

I rest my case.

Peter Laurie is a peripatetic poet and literary scholar.

MOVING?

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by George McCartney

Making Choices, Taking Chances

Ever since Blaise Pascal made his wager on the infinite, it seems the French have been gridlocked at the intersection of chance and choice. In a universe of incalculable odds, how should a person place his bet? In his artful—but never artsy—film, *The Girl on the Bridge*, director Patrice Leconte takes up Pascal's challenge and, without abandoning its metaphysics, gives it a decidedly this-worldly turn. The result is an existential romantic comedy in the Gallic mode. If this sounds deep dish, remember that depth makes the soufflé rise.

The film's recipe begins with its surreal opening scene. We meet Adele, played by Vanessa Paradis, looking as grave as she is lovely. She is being interviewed or, perhaps, deposed by an unseen woman as a gallery of middle-aged men look on. It seems she's giving a personal accounting to an anonymous officialdom, a sort of apologia to the world at large. Assuming life only begins when you start making love, she explains that she left home as soon as she could find a boy to live with. But things haven't worked out as she had supposed. Her boyfriend didn't stay around very long, and his successors have proven equally faithless. "I get conned every day of my life," Adele complains bitterly. "Hands are tricky," she elaborates. "They can make you believe anything." Having passed through so many, she knows whereof she speaks. Her realization, however, hasn't helped her: "Boys attract me like clothes. I always want to try them on." Conceding the folly of her promiscuity, she blames herself more than the perfidious parade of men who have trampled on her sexual generosity. "I am like a vacuum; I pick up all the dirt around."

So, we are not entirely surprised when in the next scene, Adele decides (at the advanced age of 21) to throw herself into the Seine. As she stands on the bridge hesitating, Gabor, a middle-aged carnival knife-thrower, comes along by chance—or is it fate? (This is Daniel Auteuil playing with utter conviction a man who is somehow both heroically intense and comically distracted, a Pascalian with one eye on the moment and the other on eternity.) "You seem to be about to make a mistake," Gabor remarks, seemingly unimpressed by her desperation. Adele tries to dismiss his interruption but cannot help being intrigued by his nonchalance. It's only when she plunges into the water—or does she fall?—that Gabor drops his pose and rushes to her rescue.

Once he's fished her out, he makes a proposition. He's looking for a new assistant. She could be the new target in his knife act. After all, given her present state of mind, she really hasn't much to lose. Besides he has recruited many of his assistants from bridges such as this. "Burned out women are my specialty," he explains with a shrug. Needless to say, Adele is hooked. She surrenders herself to his hands and finds they're quite unlike those she's become used to. Rather than being tricky, they're deft, assured, and, above all, respectful as he whisks her from dress shop to shoe store to beauty parlor, preparing her for her new role. The soundtrack booms with Benny Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall recording of "Sing, Sing, Sing" celebrating the pure romantic inventiveness of this episode in which she winsomely collaborates with his masculine decisiveness.

As they proceed to their first engagement in Monte Carlo, Gabor informs Adele that their relationship will be chaste: His personal code does not permit him to sleep with his assistants. Like a doctor, he must not compromise his skill and her safety. At this point, a physical relationship would affect his judgment. Nevertheless, they soon achieve an intimacy of another sort. As he explains to her, a knife-thrower cannot succeed unless his target inspires him. Adele is nothing if not inspiring. As she stands against the corkboard at which he hurls his knives, she gasps and sighs with almost erotic abandon as each one safely hits its mark just beyond her flesh. She comes through each performance unscathed, except for the odd nick that he tenderly bandages. Leconte's conceit is so bald, it's astonishing. He merely unmasks the sexual metaphor everyone senses in knife-throwing acts. This is courtship distilled to its essentials: step by step, feminine permission transfigures masculine desire, which is skillfully disciplined by respect and affection. By today's standards, such traditionalism is positively daring.

The film's velvety black-and-white photography is strikingly appropriate to the knife-throwing sequences. They are shot in tight, alternating close-ups of the couple's faces. Paradis's features are rendered in a hazy luminescence that brings out their soft, rounded youthfulness. Auteuil's craggy face is split vertically like the half moon, deep shadow on one side and blinding light on the other, emphasizing his hollowed eyes, sagging cheeks, and beaked nose. Their allegorical roles are literally illuminated: Leconte is meditating on the seemingly irreconcilable poles of immature desire and adult restraint. Where she is haplessly headlong, he is honorably headstrong. Their relationship will be the fulcrum on which these elemental contradictions either balance or founder. For, as we discover, they are extremes in need of one another.

Unlike Adele, Gabor is never tempted to drift. His focused existentialism won't

The Girl on the Bridge
(La Fille sur le pont)

Produced by Films Christian Fechner and France 2 Cinéma
Directed by Patrice Leconte
Screenplay by Serge Frydman
Released by Paramount Pictures

Saving Grace

Produced by Homerun Productions and Portman Entertainment Group
Distributed by Fine Line Features
Directed by Nigel Cole
Screenplay by Mark Crowdy and Craig Ferguson

Steal This Movie!

Produced by Ardent Films and Greenlight Productions
Directed by Robert Greenwald
Screenplay based on books by Anita and Abbie Hoffman
Distributed by Lions Gate Films Inc.

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allow it. Although he knows in his bones that life—this life at least—is a losing proposition, he's determined to achieve at least a limited triumph over its manifold treacheries. Like Hemingway's bullfighter, he places himself in the arena of hazard in order to master a portion of his fate. With his knife-throwing, he has staked out a philosophical position: To live honestly, he must expose himself to uncertainty, trusting his courage and skill to turn the balance of chance and choice in his favor, knowing all the while that disaster is never farther than a knife throw away. It takes Adele some time to realize it, but compared to her hit-and-run Lotharios, Gabor is far more erotic and infinitely more considerate.

In the film's *denouement*, choices must be made. Will Gabor come to realize that his control, however admirable, is sterile without Adele's sensual abandon? Will she realize that her spontaneity, however intoxicating, is aimless without his focus? Leconte has occasion to play Goodman's exquisite lovers' lament, "Goodbye," more than once as Adele and Gabor struggle with their oddly conventional relationship. Will they choose their chance or drift away to an infinity of equally perplexing bridges?

Leconte's wise and playful film gives the lie to those who prattle endlessly about the necessity of eradicating the "socially determined" differences between feminine and masculine sensibilities. With incomparable elegance and easy grace, he declares *vive la difference*.

Unlike Leconte's film, *Saving Grace*, despite its punning title, displays precious little of this supernatural commodity.

Director Nigel Cole's film tells the story of Grace Trevethyn (Brenda Blethyn), whose philandering husband has died, leaving her in poverty. Although he left her an ancestral country seat in Cornwall, it turns out he had the estate ruinously mortgaged in order to fund his various escapades. Now, the bank is closing in, and she cannot pay the loan.

When her young, pot-smoking groundskeeper Matthew (Craig Ferguson) enlists her renowned horticultural talents to save his ailing marijuana plants, the heretofore innocent, middle-aged Grace sees her chance. Soon, she's harvesting a small fortune in pot. Although the local constable quickly catches on, he turns a blind eye, not having the heart to add to Grace's troubles.

All of this is amusing, up to a point: Cannabis is not the threat some of its detractors would have us believe. The Cornish constable's live-and-let-live policy is certainly preferable to cops running the streets, guns at the ready, in pursuit of ill-advised but generally harmless tokers.

That said, it's quite another matter to treat large-scale marketing in marijuana lightly, which is exactly what the film does by having Grace fall in with a dangerous drug dealer whom we're supposed to see as a lovable rogue. This is as insulting as the phony ending that allows Grace to escape criminal contamination.

Then there's the groundskeeper whose girlfriend is pregnant. Since they both use cannabis "recreationally," you would think there might be some concern about the many birth defects that have been linked to the drug. But, no, this would interfere with the film's feel-good hedonism.

The only grace in this film is the magnificent Cornish coastline. With scenery this beautiful, it seems a shame people would have to turn to dope to get high.

Steal This Movie! also comes under a cloud of cannabis. This may explain why it's as insufferably self-absorbed as its subject, 60's yippie Abbie Hoffman. How else can we explain director Robert Greenwald's strange choice of Vincent D'Onofrio to play Hoffman? When he was young, Hoffman was a small, lean man who possessed the quicksilver mischievousness of a perpetually wired brat. D'Onofrio is large and slow of foot. Where Hoffman pranced, he lumbers.

This casting is just the first in an endless series of miscalculations in this would-be tribute to a would-be revolutionary. At one point, and without a scintilla of irony, Hoffman pays his wife Anita his idea of an endearment. "If I'd been born a woman, I woulda been Anita." As Anita, Janeane Garofalo smiles beatifically at her eloquent beau, and you instantly understand why: What more could she hope for from this shameless narcissist than his declaration that he loves her as passionately as he does himself?

The movie is infected with the same solipsistic smugness. Greenwald, assuming we are all as infatuated with Hoffman as he is, merely skims over events in a series of frenetic montages of actual and simulated newsreels. There's Abbie creating uproar at the 1968 Democratic Convention; here, he's cutting up as a defendant in the Chicago Seven trial; now, he's marching on the Pentagon; later, he's usurping a civic association leader's position in order to appoint himself chief crusader on the St. Lawrence River reclamation project. But none of these episodes is properly developed. Everything is referenced in shorthand code with a knowing nod, as if we're all worshiping at the same shrine and can quote the liturgy in our sleep.

This is not surprising. Righteous ideologues generally assume that their concerns are on everyone else's mind also. This explains why Hoffman took it for granted that the FBI had nothing better to do than keep him under perpetual surveillance. He couldn't conceive of anyone more interesting or politically dangerous than himself. At first, the film suggests that Hoffman was exaggerating his persecution; then, with a dramatic flourish, we're told the FBI actually did have a file on him. We're asked to believe that this was an inordinate breach of Hoffman's civil liberties. But this was a man who spent his life encouraging others to break the law, screamed tirelessly about toppling "Amerika," and fled drug-dealing charges. Whether the FBI's attention was excessive or not, I don't know; but I strongly suspect Hoffman would have been disconsolate if the Bureau hadn't taken an interest in him. In another time and country, he would have found himself buried in a dungeon or exiled to a gulag. This being "Amerika," however, he spent a few nights behind bars for disturbing the peace and a couple of months for selling cocaine and jumping bail.

In covering Hoffman's six years on the lam, under an assumed identity, Greenwald unintentionally reveals the man for what he was: Hoffman complains of missing his wife and son, but his overriding concern is that he's no longer recognized as Abbie. At one point, he begins screaming hysterically, "I'm Abbie Hoffman, I'm Abbie Hoffman," over and over.

Although played for pathos, this infantile tantrum of self-assertion is inadvertently the film's most genuine moment. Like Joseph Conrad's Mr. Kurtz, Hoffman was a man whose world began and ended with himself. That's why he was always right and why everyone who disagreed with him was wrong. He was the consummate idealist; he could make himself believe anything that flattered his own self-esteem. If, as many suppose, he committed suicide in 1989, we can see why: When he could no longer command front-page attention, there wasn't much else to live for.

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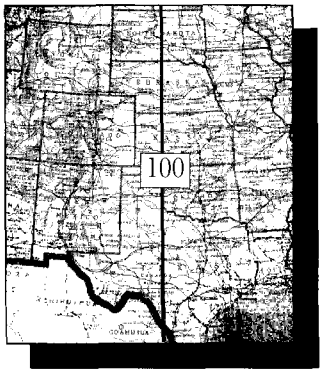
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

The Alternative Candidate

Several thousand feet below a smoke cloud 20,000 feet thick and 1,500 miles in diameter, the American West looks so peaceful, so at ease, so *normal*, no matter that over a million acres of it are on fire. The fires, most of them started by dry lightning strikes and burning out overmature forests thickened with dead and down timber, aren't really the problem. The threat, at the present moment, comes from Philadelphia and Los Angeles, where America's vaunted two-party system is engaged in further deconstructing the country whose welfare is ostensibly its *raison d'être*, not least by its encouragement of aggressive millions of immigrant aliens whose effect on American culture and institutions, as well as on the land itself, is comparable to the damage a pine beetle infestation wreaks on a Western forest. The powers that be, getting things backward as always, want the fires extinguished, the invasion ignored. Still, the traffic is noticeably lighter than when I came this way through Colorado last year: high gas prices discouraging the native tourists, unfavorable exchange rates keeping the foreign ones at home. Between Climax, the mining town that over the past century has removed and chewed up the topmost part of a 14,000-foot mountain, and Leadville, three young women in shorts and haltertops, their skins deeply tanned, jog in the shoulder of the road between two protecting motor homes decorated with banners reading "BORDER TO BORDER RUN"—Canada to Mexico, presumably. (The purposive purposelessness of modern American life.)

Salida, Colorado, in the Arkansas River valley with a view upstream to the Sphinx-like Collegiate Peaks, only 15 or 20 years ago was a relaxed Western town of the sort where, if your dog dug up a flowerbed next door, the neighbor dropped by to remark over coffee that the local hardware store was holding a clearance sale on nylon rope. Nowadays, since the Californians have arrived, you get a letter from his attorney in your mailbox instead. And much of the coffee-drinking appears to get done in latte



shops in the gentrified downtown district. I drove through it to the Budget Motel, registered, and phoned the Checks by prearrangement at the Tudor Rose Inn.

Diane and Paul Check, in raising up one son to the Church of Rome and another to The Rockford Institute, have contributed more than any other couple I know to the defense of Western civilization. Taking a well-deserved break from the battle, on vacation in Colorado, they had offered to treat me to dinner in Salida—the last civilized meal I expected to enjoy before plunging into the dark heart of the San Juan Mountains. The Tudor Rose in appearance is as unlikely as its name: a stucco-and-timber structure standing on a desert hill among bristlecone pines. The Checks had the Elizabethan Suite downstairs, with sliding doors opening on a patio where we sat drinking The Dalmore Paul produced and congratulating ourselves on having been born into interesting times. When self-congratulation showed signs of ending in depression and the single-malt was significantly diminished in the bottle, we drove back to Highway 285 and the Café Antero, which Paul had discovered on the Web before leaving Dallas-Fort Worth. Barely off the shoulder of the road, Café Antero is a roadside diner with world-class cuisine. We started with a trout pastry and went on to the mixed-game grille and a bottle of red wine; the conversation had largely to do with Andrea Marcovicci, whom the Checks had heard at Bass Hall in Dallas last winter performing her "Love Songs of World War Two" show. We finished the evening with midnight cigars and cognac at the Tudor Rose—and then I was back at the Budget Motel, viewing my assembled camp gear spread around the tiny room through a pleasant haze of nicotine and alcohol fumes. Time to return to reality in the pursuit of the allegedly (indeed, quite possibly) unreal.

Across Poncha Pass, flat as a rule as far south as Alamosa, the San Luis valley is a green irrigated plain dominated by the towering blue bulk of Sierre Blanca, overshadowed this morning by isolated cumulus clouds and lapped at its base by massive sand dunes. At Alamosa, 285 crosses the Rio Grande swinging down from the northwest and continues on 28 miles to Antonito—the launching pad for the Third Annual Sasquatch Recovery Expedition and Presidential Search, off to a regrettably late start this political season. From here on, the cultural feel is definitely Spanish: adobe churches with statues of the Virgin surrounded by flowerbeds out front; dark-skinned ranchers with flowing black mustaches and white straw hats behind the wheel of passing pickup trucks. At a few minutes past noon, I parked in front of Dos Hermanas on the main drag and went into the restaurant where a dark, pretty girl who didn't look old enough to be serving drinks was on the floor, waiting for customers to serve lunch to. Happy to be in the Southwest again, I ordered *menudo* (soup made with *posole*, small chunks of pork, and beef tripe), and drank a bottle of beer with the chips and salsa while I waited for the order to come up. Antonito doesn't change much from year to year: The mural across the street showing the antique steam engine pulling tourists through the mountains to Chama, New Mexico, hadn't been painted over after three or four seasons, and the skinny, bent, whitebearded *viejo* passing outside the plate-glass window definitely looked familiar. The *menudo* was excellent; when I mentioned to the waitress it was the best I could remember eating, she looked confused, seeming not to know what to make of the compliment. Rather than lick the bowl I ordered another beer, and was halfway through it when Dick McCuistion appeared in the door, wearing a white polo shirt and camouflage Marine cap. Having moved from Denver to Sheridan, Wyoming, two months before, instead of an easy five-hour drive he'd had a 685-mile trek last-

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ing the better part of two days. I asked him what he knew, and he said nothing much, except for a report he'd had of hikers who had started up the Tobacco Lake Trail a mile southeast of our old camp a few days earlier hearing strange howls and roars on their climb up to Conejos Peak. As the remainder of the party was set to meet us at the campsite above Platoro Reservoir, we got on the road as soon as Dick had finished with his meal.

Afternoon clouds riding above the western mountains like a cumulous echo offered no prospect of rain. With a fire ban in place on all national forest land in the Western states, we were looking at a cold camp this week, but for cooking we had the gas stove in Dick's pop-up camper and a full moon, rising in late afternoon and setting at a little past two in the morning, for light. Twenty miles west of Antonito on the road to La Manga Pass we turned onto the washboard dirt road following the Conejos River north to Platoro. The dust lay thick, and the meadows stretching between the aspen forests and the road were burnt brown. At Lake Fork Campground we crossed Lake Fork Creek where it enters the Conejos and began the thousand-foot climbout up to our campsite, still ten miles away.

At camp, the Powder River gate had been dragged open and bent, a part of the fence pulled down, but the fire ring was in place from the year before, no sign of any human presence more recent than the previous elk season. Remembering the accident—if it *was* an accident—to the trailer awning on our last visit here, Dick pulled the camper out of the two-track onto high ground, at a safe distance from the tree line. We cranked the top up, slid out the bunk beds fore and aft, turned the sink upright, unfolded the stove, and brought in the gear and supplies. We boiled water for tea, carried the cups outside, and sat in folding chairs to drink it while admiring the scenery.

"Do you remember the first time we heard It two years ago—I'd just finished asking you if you'd considered what could have made the sounds you heard at Leadville if it wasn't what you later decided It had to be?"

"Sure," Dick said. And right then It came again as if to say that It remembered too, not more than 500 yards out from camp, across the marsh behind a stand of trees screening the hairpin turn in the road: neither a cry nor a howl but an announcement, wordless yet vaguely comprehensible—Now hear this! . . . And then, sounding directly behind it like a mad chorus, the familiar coyote uproar of whoops, barks, and giggles.

"It didn't take long, did it?" I asked.

"No. It didn't."

We opened a couple of cans for supper, heated the contents on the little stove, and drank a glass of red wine together as the moon lifted into view in a pale sky above the pointed pines.

"The Democratic Convention opened today," I offered finally.

"It did?"

"Aren't you sorry we're missing it on TV?"

"No."

There was no sense of threat apparent, so we both turned in after sundown for a good night's sleep, not maintaining a watch. I woke several times before morning, once with the impression of having been awakened by some presence close by, but the night was wonderfully still, transfixed in the light of the waning moon. We were up with the sun, made coffee, and paid a visit to the woods carrying a roll of toilet paper and a Marine entrenching tool before strapping on revolvers and driving up to the higher bench midway between camp and the 12,000-foot knob dominating the basin.

Where the road dead-ended beside a pile of slash timber we left the truck and continued on foot to an alpine lake fed by percolation from the peak above. The lake, with grass ends floating on the surface and tadpoles riling the soft bottom, looked shallow; it was surrounded by a margin of mud and green grass imprinted with the tracks of elk. Continuing along the shore we came to the outlet stream, which Dick's topo map showed to be Lake Fork Creek at its head, draining to our camp below and on to Big and Rock Lakes, and the Conejos River. We followed the game trail beside it and in less than a quarter-mile glimpsed a clearing through the trees that looked somehow familiar. It turned out to be the open bench above a talus cliff where, from camp, we had often watched elk browse in early morning. Five hundred feet below and about a mile out, the trailer was in plain sight; it had been joined by a Jeep and a pickup truck.

"Looks like Drotar and his friend made it in," Dick said. "Uh-oh," he added, as low thunder rumbled in the east and we both looked up to the soggy cumulus forming above the mountains. "I'm going back, now. I had enough getting wet in Vietnam."

Barry Drotar had brought even more gear than Dick had, but no tent, as he and Al planned to sleep in their vehicles. We got as much of it set up as we could before the rain came, and then Dick and I retreated to the camper, while Barry and Al got under the tarpaulin they stretched between the Jeep Cherokee and Al's Ford truck.

"I don't like the feel of this storm," Dick remarked as we sat over lunch across the foldout table. "It strikes me as being pretty much a repeat of last year."

"How could it be? Last year was a monsoon year. This is a drought one."

"I have an idea the drought just ended," he said.

We spent the next four days in the camper except for four or five hours in the morning, before the rains blew in to turn the granite mountain soggy with water, or leave it under a couple of inches of hail. Without a radio, we had no way of knowing the storms were localized, confined to the Colorado-New Mexico border: The rest of the West, trapped beneath a high-pressure ridge and parched by 30-percent humidity, continued to burn cheerfully. Meanwhile, on the mountain it grew wetter and wetter. Clothes had to be dried over the gas stove, and firearms required careful wiping with an oily cloth to prevent rust spots from developing through the bluing. The Voice never asserted itself again, and even the coyotes quit yodeling: Keith and Andrew Foster didn't make it to the Conejos at all (owing, we later discovered, to car trouble). On the third day, Barry and Al cried uncle and went back to Mancos, Colorado. In a brief respite between squalls, Dick and I packed in the camper, cased the guns, and bailed out after them.

"That's scientific research for you," Dick observed as, streaming water, we struggled to raise the tongue of the camper with a Handi-Man jack. "You can't ever expect nature to cooperate."

"I'm not thinking about science," I told him. "For this, we missed the Democratic National Convention on TV?"

Under the camouflage parka, he shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh well. Perhaps by 2004 we'll have found the perfect candidate to offer them: the kind of guy that just wants to get lost and stay that way. They say a good man's hard to find, you know."

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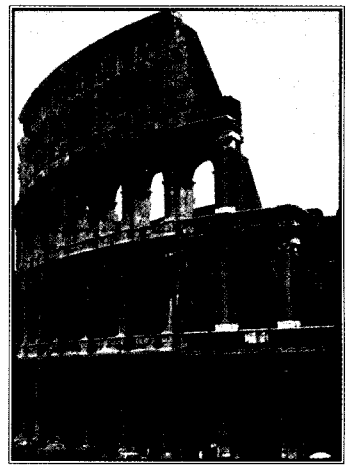

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